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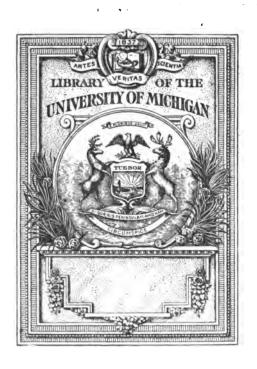
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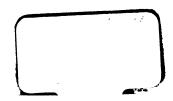
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THE LIFE OF WORDS

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THE SYMBOLS OF IDEAS.

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# THE LIFE OF WORDS AS THE SYMBOLS OF IDEAS.

BY

## ARSÈNE DARMESTETER,

Professor of the History of the French Language and of Old French Literature, at the Sorbonne.

### LONDON: KEGAN PAUL, TRENCH & CO., 1, PATERNOSTER SQUARE 1886.

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#### TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

THE pages here translated are the substance of four lectures by M. Arsène Darmesteter, delivered in London in a private house, and to a necessarily very limited audience; but the interest excited in his hearers was so great that M. Darmesteter has kindly allowed them to appear in the present form, and has given the translation the advantage of his minute revision.

The only variations from the French original occur in a few passages in which M. Darmesteter speaks of language in general, and not of the French language only; and in those, English examples have been substituted, with the author's sanction, for those originally adduced.

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#### AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

DURING the latter part of last year, the author was asked to deliver in London a short series of lectures in French, on some questions of philology, and the subject he chose was the "Life of Words," in so far as they are the symbols of ideas.

The work offered to the English public is a translation of the manuscript of these lectures, which have not yet been published in French. Due to the result of researches in the French language, the following pages deal almost exclusively with that idiom. It would have been impossible to adapt the work to the English language without re-writing it entirely.

Many of the examples will be found repeated in the course of this little treatise. The linguistic facts under consideration present so much complexity that one and the same change of meaning may be studied from many points of view; and it seemed to the author that the best way of demonstrating this complexity was to investigate completely the various aspects of a certain number of examples.

A. D.

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INTRODUCTION.

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#### INTRODUCTION.

I. It is now a commonplace truth that languages are living organisms whose life, though a purely intellectual one, is none the less real, and is in truth comparable to that of plants and animals.

For several centuries, the classical languages were studied as dead languages; they were learned only on account of their noble literature, and to enable men of letters to exercise themselves in the difficult art of writing by imitating the great models of antiquity.

At most, a few scholars studied the mysteries of manuscripts, and of the rare and doubtful forms which they presented, in order to acquire a better understanding of the texts. The study of the great literary languages of modern times was carried on in very much the same way, though here the practical knowledge, which was naturally of use, lent additional interest to the subject.

The discovery of Sanskrit, at the end of the last century, gave rise to the *Science of Language*. The historical development of languages was investigated, and they were studied for their own sake. The attention of the philologist was claimed not only by the diction of Sophocles and Demosthenes, of Cicero and Virgil, but also by Homeric and Byzantine Greek, and the dialects flourishing then and still living in Hellas, by the Latin of pre-classic times and that of the decadence, and by the formless Italic dialects.

The humblest tongues were noted, examined, and studied in their reciprocal relations; and a general inquiry was instituted and is still pursued with a view to drawing up a complete catalogue of all spoken languages; to discover their origin, and trace their historical development; and also, if possible, to determine by the history of languages the history of the civilization of the peoples who speak them.

We will briefly enunciate the different problems of a general nature which arise in the study of language, and which are connected with psychology. Languages are the immediate forms of thought, the instruments created by thought for its expression. They are mirrors which reflect national modes of thought.

II. First, what do we know of the origin of language?

This question, so full of interest, so exciting to our curiosity, still belongs to the domain of pure hypothesis. The subject is not ripe for discussion. Even in the languages of which we possess the most ancient documents (of the Egyptian, Semitic, and Indo-Euro-

pean families) we find only relatively recent forms which themselves imply a long series of anterior transformations.

However far back we extend our scientific induction, we are met by roots which are evidently derived from primitive roots, irrevocably lost to us. Human language cannot give us the key to its own origin. To attempt the solution of the problem, we must call in the aid of cognate facts, to enable us to dominate the question and bring it within our grasp. But where shall we seek these facts? We may safely affirm that all that has as yet been written on the subject belongs, not to science, but to metaphysics.

The fascinating problem of the acquisition of language by the infant is more easily understood, and the materials are ready at hand. The study of the facts will doubtless show that the simple mind of the infant begins by attaching to the few words it possesses a gradually increasing number of ideas, with the increasing number of objects perceived. Later, by an action of an inverse character, the augmented number of words which it has learnt will enable it to limit the too wide generalizations which it had at first adopted. The more rapid acquisition of new facts than of new words will probably account for most of the psychological phenomena of child-language.

We may now consider the development of existing languages.

TN. Languages are in perpetual evolution. A lan-

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guage at any given period of its existence is in a state of equilibrium more or less lasting, resulting from two contrary forces perpetually opposed to one another, the conservative force tending to maintain the integrity of the mother-tongue, and the revolutionary force tending to impel it in new directions.

The action of civilization, however primitive this may be, the respect for tradition, the care of parents and of teachers to cause children to speak correctly, a natural good taste and desire for well-chosen speech, are the chief causes which maintain and preserve the purity of a language. At a later stage of literary development we may add the influence of sacred books (as, for instance, the Bible in England and in Germany, the Koran in Mussulman countries), and of works preserved by their literary beauty, and thus calculated to inspire coming generations with respect for their admirable diction.

But, on the other hand, there exists the revolutionary force which deforms not only the pronunciation but also the grammar. The less it is checked, the more rapid will be the changes in the language. This is to be seen in the non-literary dialects or patois, in the idioms of barbarous or savage races, in which the changes are often so rapid and precipitate as entirely to change the form of speech in one generation, or to divide ad infinitum the varieties of one and the same tongue, within the limits of a very small region. Professor Max Müller has shown with much force how wonderful is the power of a language to multiply into dialects;

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how rapidly, in the same region, it may undergo complete transformation, if left to itself.\*

But we cannot admit this to be a normal character of linguistic development. This division—and subdivision is opposed to the end of language, which thus becomes unintelligible except within the narrowest limits of space and time; continual change deprives it of half its utility.

Precipitancy of evolution such as this is due to the absence of the conservative force; the force of revolution carries all before it.

As we have said, language should be in a state of equilibrium between these two forces; and if either is wanting, we have no longer a state of health, but of disease. It is in literary languages that their action is really normal, and it is on these that we must set the most value. As opposed to savage tongues and patois, which are supposed to represent the natural state of human speech, these languages have been denounced as artificial—artificial because they bear the impress of art and civilization.†

But those who adopt these views forget that the progress of civilization, to which we owe great literary works and the artistic forms of language which have preserved them, is a movement as natural and has causes as unconscious as the other manifestations of human activity—art, religion, social and political institutions, etc.

<sup>\* &</sup>quot;Lectures on the Science of Language," Second Lecture.

<sup>†</sup> Max Müller, ibid.

The causes which underlie the development of patois are, it is true, simpler and more easy to study; but the corresponding factors in literary languages, though more complex, are none the less natural and interesting. To cite but one example—Men of letters in England, in France, in Germany, etc., have borrowed from Latin and Greek a multitude of words which they have brought almost unchanged into their own languages; thus introducing a large artificial element into the lexicon. But this invasion is itself due to historical causes, which it is the task of science to define, and the combination of the two elements, native and foreign, has led to curious phenomena, in which—for him who knows how to observe—new aspects of the incessant workings of language are evident.

Since language is the means used by men to express their thoughts, as their mental horizon grows wider, as their speech expresses more and more new ideas, so will it gain in nobility and grandeur, and will offer more and more material to the observation of the philologist and of the thinker.

IV. The action of the revolutionary forces of language is shown most of all in phonetic alterations and analogical changes.

It has been rightly said that phonetic evolution begins with children, who, badly trained or neglected, acquire a pronunciation slightly differing from that of their parents. Some small defect of pronunciation grows up with them, and is transmitted to neighbouring young people, and when the new generation has taken the place of the foregoing one, the new form is adopted in the family, the village, the district, and the region, and has become part and parcel of the language.\*

Thus we see that change in pronunciation does not, as a rule, take place in a single word, but in a sound, and thus, in all the words in which the same sound occurs under the same conditions, we have the same/alteration.

As soon as the change has become transmitted to the majority of a people whose daily intercourse is uninterrupted, it becomes a fact of the language to which the minority must submit. If it is rejected by the people of a neighbouring district originally speaking the same tongue, we have a separation into two dialects. Thus we see how it is that in this process which, in the course of centuries, tends to engender from one primitive form of speech a whole family of different tongues, the phonetic changes in words take place with extraordinary regularity similar to that which obtains in the physical sciences.

In the development of the Indo-European language into Sanskrit, into German, into Old Slav, into Greek, Latin, etc.; in the evolution of popular Latin at the end of the Empire, on the lips of various peoples, into the different Romance languages, we find the changes in the sounds occurring so regularly, that it has been said that every apparent exception is due to the

<sup>\*</sup> Professor Louis Havet.

action of other laws which interfere with the action of more general laws,—in a word, that phonetic laws are absolute; "phonetic laws act blindly, of blind natural necessity; they permit of absolutely no exception or survival." \*

V. The second cause of change, and perhaps the most important one, analogy, is the mental process by which a grammatical form or termination belonging to a natural group of words is extended to a series of new words, so as to shape them after the same model, and substitute unity for previous variety. By a new treatment of old elements it creates a new system.

Sometimes analogy exerts a simplifying action only, as where it reduces the manifold forms due to etymology to one common type found previously in the greatest number of single words of the same class. Sometimes, however, it creates; † for, in order to

\* "Nach allem, was erst die methodisch strenger gewordene forschung unserer tage ermittelt hat, stellt sich das immer deutlicher heraus, dass die lautgesetze der sprachen geradezu blind, mit blinder naturnotwendigkeit wirken, dass es ausnahmen von ihnen oder verschonungen durch dieselben schlechterdings nicht gibt." Osthoff, "Das Verbum in der Nominalcomposition," p. 326.)

The preceding discussion on phonetic evolution shows clearly that the development of dialects which Prof. Max Müller considers as an independent force, opposing that of phonetic evolution and destined to repair the ravages which it causes, is, in fact, nothing else but phonetic alteration.

† This last character of analogy has not yet been very well grasped or understood. Notwithstanding the attention which

mark a new feature in the declension, in the conjugation, or in the syntax, analogy often seizes on some character belonging to a few words, or even only to a single word, gives to it the value required, and extends its use to all the forms.\*

Such is, with phonetic alteration, the chief cause of evolution in language.

It is a curious spectacle to witness, in the history of a language, the various actions of these forces opposed to one another and to the traditions of the past. In the struggle, the different tendencies of nations in the act of transforming their mode of speech become apparent and definite.

VI. Other problems are allied to the same general questions. To what are due the birth and the extinction of languages? during dialectal evolution, what are the causes which assign to each region its peculiar form of dialect? On the other hand, what are the reciprocal influences of two neighbouring languages? How far may these be exerted without involving the extinction of one or the other? To consider no longer the people, but the individual,—is it possible to know thoroughly one or more foreign is being devoted to the subject, the true characters of analogy remain still ill-defined.

\* For instance, the French, feeling the need of unity of grammatical form to render the first person plural in all tenses, took the termination of the unique form s-umus (which has given the modern -ons), and applied it to all the tenses of all the conjugations, in which it has thus replaced the various forms representing the Latin -amus, -emus, -imus, -imus.

languages as well as the mother tongue? Is it possible to bear in mind the different, and often contrary, modes of grouping the ideas without injuring the originality of the mind?

The questions which philology asks of psychology are, as we have already seen, unlimited in number and extent, and we have left untouched the fundamental one of the relation of language and thought—of the  $\chi$  gain produced to thought by language.

VII. After these general considerations, we may examine briefly the problems which pertain to the special parts of each separate language.

A language contains three series of facts—words, grammatical forms, and syntactical combinations. The most important of the three is that of the grammatical forms.

Grammatical forms, or the system of declension and conjugation, constitute the very essence of a language. They are the mould in which the words are cast. A people may change the etymological elements of its speech and its syntax; if it keeps its grammatical forms, the language remains the same. With the same words and the same syntax (if this were possible in such a case), the language would be a new one if the grammatical forms were changed. English has remained a Teutonic language, notwithstanding the twenty-five or thirty thousand French words which have penetrated into it, because the grammar has remained Teutonic.

Persian, in spite of the Arabic element which has replaced the native one almost entirely, remains an Indo-European language, because the grammar has not become Semitic. Words are borrowed, are forgotten, are lost, are revived, but the mould of declension and conjugation, which the language impresses on this mobile material, remains identical and unchanged as long as the language.

It would be inconceivable that French should give to English the imperfect tense which it lacks, or that English should communicate its double future, shall and will, to French.

But in the continuous evolution of human speech, grammatical forms, like other elements, become transformed, and then the language changes. The Latin system developed into that of the Romance languages; the declension disappeared; the neuter was lost; the pronouns were re-formed; the conjugation lost the passive and deponent voices, and its moods and its tenses have been replaced by a system for the most part different.

The grammatical forms are the guiding features of the classification of languages into families, genera, and species. The tongues spoken on the surface of the globe have been divided into monosyllabic, agglutinative, and flexional. We will not affirm that agglutinative languages derive necessarily from monosyllabic ones, or that flexional languages have passed through a monosyllabic and an agglutinative stage. This remains as yet undemonstrated and undemonstrable.

· Without seeking the origin of systems so different, we may call attention to the various ways of thought which they imply. (Monosyllabic and agglutinative languages offer a logic and a mode of combination of the different elements of our thoughts almost inconceivable to us Europeans.) How great even in flexional languages is the variety of systems, the result of differences in modes of conception and feeling! The conjugation of the Semitic languages, so rich in voices, and so poor in moods and tenses, supposes a psychological state very different from that which has produced the Aryan conjugation, with its wealth of moods and tenses, and its poverty of voices. We are in the presence of two moulds utterly different, and all the efforts of the scholars who have attempted to demonstrate their common origin have as yet failed.\* In the European family itself, in spite of common origin, the conjugation has developed into systems so different, in Slavonic, German, Greek, Latin, Romance, Sanskrit, etc., that they seem to us absolutely separate. The capability of human thought to embody itself in forms so radically different is not one of the least important facts which present themselves to the attention of the philosopher.

\* Comparative grammar allows us to determine the primitive type from which the different Semitic languages have been derived. It may be hoped that, by the study of the Berber dialects, we may be enabled to reconstruct a more ancient form of language, the parent, on the one hand, of the Semitic, on the other, of both the Egyptian and Berber idioms. Perhaps this ancestral form will further prove to have a common origin with the Indo-European tongues.

VIII. The construction or syntax is essential to the very existence of language, since, in order to express continuous thought, words with their proper grammatical forms must be combined into sentences.

Constructions are due to historical or logical causes.

As a rule, the actual usage at a given epoch is the result of a struggle between tradition and the logical causes which for the time being tend to impel a language along new tracks.

Here again we sometimes find analogy at work, shaping certain constructions after the likeness of similar constructions. Underlying these changes we may clearly see the change in the habits of men's minds, which have come to look at things from a new point of view, and to analyse their ideas differently.

When we perceive the French people gradually decomposing the synthetic constructions inherited from Latin, and slowly substituting analytical ones, we gain an insight into the ways of thought of a race to whom clearness in its ideas is a necessity, so that it subdivides them in order to understand them.

IX. Words may be studied from different points of view.

They are pure sounds, depending for their production on the physiology of the lungs, the larynx, and the mouth. Each language has its own system of sounds, due to certain habits of articulation. These habits change insensibly, in the way which we have pre-

viously described,\* leading to definite phonetic transformations.

Besides the great general questions we have indicated, there are many points of detail to be considered. What is the part played by environment and race in the production of phonetic changes? Why do neighbouring dialects, identical in origin, e.g. Piedmontese and Venetian, acquire such opposite characters? Why has the original Teutonic lost the extreme sweetness found in the Gothic of the fourth century, and exchanged it for the rough and rude harmonies of modern German? How is it that a language at a certain period rejects a pronunciation which it will afterwards accept without any difficulty?

X. Words are also natural and fixed groups of sounds, each possessing a distinct individuality. They give rise to other words, and produce families. They attach to themselves, now one or more other words to form compounds, now special terminations called suffixes, which change their nature and function to form derivatives.

Each language has its own peculiar modes of creating compound words in conformity with particular logical principles.

The Romance languages possess hardly any examples of the mode of composition by means of the genitive, so numerous in English and in German; whereas, in German, composition by means of apposition, extremely

\* Vide supra, p. 9.

fertile with Romance languages, is almost unknown. A English, again, has preserved a mode of composition found in the primitive Indo-European, and lost to modern German dialects.\*

Derivation shows us a process of an entirely different nature from that of composition. Where the English gives us apple-tree, the German Applebaum (composition by means of the genitive), the French has pomm-ier.

On reflection this process seems strange. We see how, first, the common termination of several words is considered apart, and endowed with an abstract signification; how it is then added to a number of simple words to give them this signification; and further, by insensible extensions, it comes to express new relations. Thus we have a creation of new words, which do not exist by themselves, and possess neither individuality nor independence, never isolated in speech, and only living as terminations of other words, and yet serving to convey general ideas. Such is the surprising feat which language accomplishes in the formation of suffixes.

It is, perhaps, in derivation by the aid of suffixes that we are able to see most clearly the action of the mental forces which affect language, because they are here exerted on but few elements (the number of suffixes being necessarily very small), and because the ideas expressed are simple.

The methodical comparison of the modes of wordformation in different languages is most instructive.

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<sup>\*</sup> e.g. good-natured, large-minded, etc.

Thus in the Teutonic languages the practically infinite capability of composition is compensated by poverty in derivation. On the other hand, the weakness in composition in the Romance languages is counterbalanced by an incomparable richness in the modes of derivation. It would be interesting to study the gain or loss in the expression of thought by the use of one or the other of the two processes.

XI. Finally, words are the symbols of ideas.

The study of this question forms the subject of this little book.

We wish to examine first the psychological nature of he mental life which our thought gives to words and to investigate their birth and development. We shall further study the historical and mental causes which induce changes of meaning in words, in what way language is affected by the creation of new words, how it regulates the relations of meanings between similar words (synonymy) and assigns to each one its special value and function; and finally, how it condemns certain words to oblivion and death.

We shall thus attempt to determine to what extent the history of changes of sense is a reflex of the changes of thought, and renders visible the laws of the mind in the audible expression of its ideas.

We do not attempt to trace the life of words from their primitive origin, but from the form immediately preceding that under consideration. Thus, in biology, when we describe the history of the individual we do not seek out the origin of the species, but simply its parents.

We have drawn many comparisons, in the course of this work, between the science of language and the natural sciences. These are not due to preconceived ideas on the part of the author; they came naturally in the train of thought. Many years of research on the history of the Romance idioms have convinced him of the truth of the conclusion, already arrived at by other philologists, that evolution is the law of linguistic development.

Since each group of languages consists of varieties of one and the same type, differentiated in space and time, and since, at a given epoch for a given people, the state of the language is a state of equilibrium determined by the sum of facts accepted by the people as a whole, all individual arbitrary action is inadmissible.

The author's knowledge of the natural sciences does not allow him to affirm the absolute truth of the Darwinian theory as applied to them, but in language . evolution by natural selection is a fact. 11 1 . , •

# FIRST PART.

HOW WORDS ARE BORN.

# FIRST PART. HOW WORDS ARE BORN.

### CHAPTER I.

### GENERAL VIEW OF THE QUESTION.

1. Words are born in two ways; by new creations of words, or neologisms of words, and by new creations of meaning, or neologisms of meaning.

When language creates a new word, it has recourse either to loans from foreign languages, or to processes of derivation which form a new word from one already existing, by addition of prefixes and suffixes, or by combination with one or more other words. The study of these loans and of these processes of derivation concerns grammar and the history of the vocabulary. Here we have only to deal with them with regard to the representation of new ideas.

When language creates a new meaning, it gives to an already existing word a function which it did not possess before. Without appearing to affect the vocabulary it makes in truth a real new word out of such a word, since with an economy of sound it gives two functions to the same form.

The neologism of meaning affords far richer material to our logical and psychological study, since it is mainly in the change of meaning that the process of the mind is shown as it wields and fashions the vocabulary.

2. In the most normal stage of language words keep their own meanings; they remain attached to the objects which they designate, and the relation between the sign and the thing signified remains unaltered. Thus, in spite of the decay which phonetic laws have imposed on Latin words during their passage into the Romance languages, very many of them have continued to express the same ideas and to awaken the same images in the new idioms.

Not to go beyond the French language, here, for example, is a long list, which might easily be doubled or trebled, of words whose signification has not been modified from the Latin epoch to our own days; they belong to all orders of ideas, and represent concrete or abstract facts, members of the animal, vegetable, or mineral kingdoms, divers forms of human activity, both material and intellectual.

### I. Substantives.\*

Aeramen	airain	brass
æstatem	été	summer
alam	aile	wing
amaritudinem	amertume	bitterness
amicum	ami	friend
amygdala, -orum	$\mathbf{amande}$	almond
anchoram	ancre	anchor
animam	âme	soul
annum	an	year
aquam	eau	water
aquilam	aigle	eagle
arborem	arbre	$\mathbf{tree}$
ardorem	ardeur	$\mathbf{ardour}$
argentum	argent	silver
artem	art	art
aurum	or	gold
avenam	avoine	oats
Balneum	bain	bath
baptisma	baptême	$\dot{ ext{baptism}}$
barbam	barbe	beard
bonitatem	bonté	goodness
bovem	$\mathbf{b}\mathbf{\hat{e}}\mathbf{u}\mathbf{f}$	ox
brachium .	bras	arm
butyrum	beurre	butter
buxum	buis	box /

<sup>\*</sup> The following lists contain only words of popular formation. As the majority of French nouns are derived from the Latin accusative, most of the Latin substantives and adjectives appear in this case.

Caelum ciel cæmentum calorem canem capillum capram carbonem carpinum catenam caulem chon cive cepam ceram cire cerevisiam cerf cervum chordam corde Christianum cilium cil cinerem cingula, -orum circulum cisternam cité civitatem clef clavem codamqueue consilium consuctudinem cœur cor corium cuir coronam costam côte

sky ciment cement chaleur heat chien dog hair/ cheven chèvre goat charbon coal charme hornbeam chaîne chain cabbage chive wax cervoise beer stag cord Chrétien Christian eye-lash cinder cendre sanglegirth cercle circle citerne cistern city key tail conseil counsel coutume custom heart leather couronne crown rib

# GENERAL VIEW OF THE QUESTION.

cretam	craie	chalk
cristam	crête	crest
crucem	croix	cross
crustam	<b>c</b> roûte	crust
cubitum	coude	${f elbow}$
cupam	cuve	vat
Damum	daim	doe
dentem	dent	tooth
digitum	$\mathbf{doigt}$	$\mathbf{finger}$
dolorem	douleur	pain
donum	don	gift
dorsum	dos	back
Eleemosynam	aumône	alms
episcopum	évêque	bishop
Fabam	fève	$\mathbf{bean}$
faciem	face	face
familiam	famille	family
favorem	faveur	favour
febrem	fièvre	fever
fel	fiel	gall
fenestram	fenêtre	window
ferrum	fer	iron
festa, -orum	fête	feast
filiam	fille	daughter
filius	fils	son
finem	$\mathbf{fin}$	$\mathbf{end}$
flammam	flamme	$\mathbf{flame}$
florem	fleur	flower
fluctum	flot	wave
fluvium	fleuve	river

feuille leaf folia, -orum fratrem frère brother frontem front forehead fourche furcam fork Gaudia, -orum ioie joy gelu gel frost gendre generum son-in-law gingivam gencive gum glaciem glace ice glandem gland acorn glirem loir dormouse gloriam gloire glory grammaticam grammaire grammar grâce gratiam grace granum grain grain gubernaculum rudder gouvernail guttam goutte drop Hederam lierre ivy hominem homme man honorem honneur honour horam heure hour Imperatorem Empereur Emperor insulam île isle Lacrimam larme tear bed lit lectum leonem lion lion leporem lièvre hare libram livre, s. f. pound librum livre, s. m. book limam lime file

linguam	langue	tongue
lineam	ligne	line
linum	lin	$\mathbf{flax}$
locum	lieu	place
lupum	loup	$\mathbf{wolf}$
Malum	$\mathbf{mal}$	evil
manum	main	$\mathbf{hand}$
mare	mer	sea
marginem	marge	margin
maritum	mari	husband
marmor	marbre	$\mathbf{marble}$
martisdiem	mardi	${f Tuesday}$
matrem	mère	mother
mattam	natte	$\mathbf{mat}$
mel	miel	honey
membrum	$\mathbf{membre}$	$\mathbf{member}$
mensem	mois	month
monasterium	moûtier	monastery
montem	mont	mount
mores	mœurs	morals
mortem	mort	$\mathbf{death}$
mulam	$\mathbf{mule}$	mule
murum	mur	wall
Nanum	nain	$\mathbf{dwarf}$
nasum	$\mathbf{nez}$	nose
nidum	$\mathbf{nid}$	$\mathbf{nest}$
noctem	nuit	night
nodum	$\mathbf{n}$	knot
nucem ·	noix	${f nut}$
Oculum	œil	eye

operam	œuvre	work
ovum	œuf	egg
Palatium	palais	palace
paleam	paille	straw
panem	pain	bread
partem	part	part
passum	pas	step
patrem	père	father
pedem	pied .	foot
perticam	perche	pole
picem	poix	pitch
plantam	plante	plant
platanum	plane	plane-tree
plumbum	plomb	lead
plumam	plume	feather
pluvia	pluie	rain
pontem	pont	bridge
populum	peuple	people
porcum	porc	pork
pratum	pré	meadow
pulicem	puce	flea
puteum	puits	well ·
Quadratum	carré	square
quæṣitam	quête	quest
Rabiem	rage	rage
regem	roi	king
reginam	reine	queen
ripam	rive	bank
rosam	rose	rose
Sanguinem	sang	blood

sanitatem	santé	$\mathbf{health}$
scalam	échelle	$\mathbf{ladder}$
scrinium	écrin	case
simiam	singe	аре
sinum	sein	$\mathbf{bosom}$
sitem	soif	thirst
somnium	songe	$\mathbf{dream}$
sonum	son	$\mathbf{sound}$
soror .	sœur	sister
sortem	sort	$\mathbf{lot}$
spinam	épine	${f thorn}$
stabula, -orum	étable	stable
sulphur	soufre	sulphur
supercilium	sourcil	eye-brow
${f Tabulam}$	table	table
talpam	taupe	$\mathbf{m}$ ole
tectum	toit	$\mathbf{roof}$
telam	toile	$\mathbf{web}$
tempus	temps	time
terminum	$\mathbf{terme}$	term
terram	terre	earth
tincam	tenche	tench
tonum	ton	tone
turrem	tour $s. f.$	tower
Ungulam	ongle	nail
unionem	oignon	onion
Vaccam	vache	cow
vailem	val	vale
vela, -orum	<b>v</b> oil <b>e</b>	veil
venam	veine	vein

venin venenum venom ventrem ventre belly ventum vent wind vermem ver worm vestimentum vêtement vestment virtutem vertu virtne vitam vie life etc. etc. etc.

### II. ADJECTIVES.

aigu Acutum acute altum haut high amabilem aimable amiable bitter amarum amer rough asperum âpre Bellumbeautiful beau bonum bon good brief brevem bref Calidum chaud hot carum cher dear campestrem of the fields champêtre crassum fat gras crudum cru raw Dulcem donx sweet durum dur hard Firmum ferme firm fortem fort strong fragilem frêle frail frigidum froid cold Grandem grand great

•		
galbinum	jaune	<b>ye</b> llo <b>w</b>
Humilem	humble	humble
Inimicum	ennemi	enemy
Juvenem	jeune	young
Largum	large	wide
lassum	las	tired
longum	long	long
Mortalem	mortel	mortal
mollem	mou	$\mathbf{soft}$
Nigrum	noir	black
novum	neuf	new
nudum	nu	$\mathbf{nude}$
$\mathbf{Qualem}$	quel	such
Rigidum	$\mathbf{raide}$	stiff
Sanum	sain	healthy
sanctum	saint	holy
salvum	sauf	safe
Tepidum	tiède	tepid
tenerum	tendre	tender
terrestrem ·	terrestre	terrestrial
Vanum	vain	vain
vetus	vieux	old
viridem	vert	green
vivum	<b>v</b> if	lively
		•

## III. VERBS.

# A. Verbs of the First Conjugation.

Amare	aimer	love
appellare	${f appeler}$	call
Balneare	baigner	bathe

basiare	baiser	kiss
Cantare	chanter	sing
clavare	clouer	nail
Demorari	demeurer	remain
dignari	daigner	deign
donare	donner	give
durare	durer	last
Lavare	laver	wash
levare	lever	raise
laudare	louer	praise
Monstrare	montrer	show
Nodare	nouer	knot
Operari	ouvrer	work
Portare	porter	carry
pretiare	priser	value
Salutare	saluer	salute
salvare	sauver	save
sonare	sonner	$\mathbf{sound}$
Tentare	tenter	tempt
tonare	tonner .	thunder

# B. Verbs of other Conjugations.

Admittere	admettre	admit
aperire	ou <b>vr</b> ir	open
audire	ouir	hear
Benedicere	bénir	bless
Cognoscere	connaître	know
conducere	conduire	lead
comprehendere	comprendre	understand
Dicere	dire	say

Facere	faire	do
finire	finir	finish
frigere	frire	fry
fundere	fondre	$\mathbf{melt}$
fugere	fuir	fly
Gaudere	jouir	rejoice
Jacere	gésir	lie
jungere	joindre	join
Lucere	luire	shine
Mentire	mentir	lie
movere	mouvoir .	move
Nasci	naître	be born
nocere	nuire	$\mathbf{hurt}$
Parescere	paraître	appear
Reducere	$\mathbf{r} \acute{\mathbf{e}} \mathbf{d} \mathbf{u} \dot{\mathbf{r}} \mathbf{e}$	reduce
ridere	rire	laugh
rumpere	rompre	break
respondere	répondre	answer
Sentire	sentir	feel
sequi	suivre	follow
Tenere	tenir	$\mathbf{hold}$
tondere	$\mathbf{tondre}$	shear

If we could go back yet further from the Latin to the primitive Indo-European language, from which the greater part of these words are derived, we should no doubt find that hardly any changes have taken place in their meaning, and as far as we can anticipate, if they continue to live in the series of developments which time may introduce into our 4. What are the logical modes according to which these changes are produced? What are their psychological and moral reasons? How do these new words, and these new senses obtain admission into language and affect it? These are the three questions into which we may resolve the one question: How are words born?

### CHAPTER II.

### LOGICAL CONDITIONS OF CHANGES IN MEANING.

5. In the study of the logical conditions which rule the change in meaning effected by the progress of thought, we must proceed from the simple to the compound, and start from the most elementary facts to attain to the most complex combinations.

And first, What is a word?

#### I. OF THE WORD.

6. In every spoken language the word is a sound or group of articulate sounds to which those who speak that language attach an intellectual value. The word is a sonorous sign which by a regular association of ideas recalls either the image of a material object or an abstract notion. The mind retains the abiding recollection of this association, and whenever the memory awakens the word, the word in its turn awakens the image or idea; and conversely, whenever the memory awakens the image or idea, this appears under the wrappage of the word. To learn the vocabulary of a

language consists precisely in engraving on the memory the groups of articulate sounds of this language and in connecting them with the images and the ideas whereof they are the signs.

It follows from this, that the life of words is only the abiding value which the mind, by force of habit, regularly gives to them, a value which makes them the normal signs of such images or ideas. Words are born when the mind makes a new word into the habitual expression of an idea. Words develop or decay when the mind regularly attaches to one and the same word either a more extended or more restricted group of images or of ideas. Words die when the mind ceases to see beneath them the images or the ideas of which they were the habitual signs, and consequently, when using the words no longer, it forgets them. The life of words arises, then, from the activity of thought which modifies in divers ways the relations established by it between the objects of this activity, images of material things and abstract notions, and articulate sounds called words, out of which it makes so many signs.

7. The word is the servant of the idea. Without idea no word can exist; it would then be a mere assemblage of sounds. The idea can exist without words; but it then remains in the subjective state in the mind of the individual and does not form part of the language.

Thus, it seems that a language ought to possess as many words as those who speak it have simple ideas, that it ought to create a new word for each new simple idea. But the methods of creation of new words are often insufficient to render the new ideas, and, moreover, memory would be crushed under the weight of words. The mind makes use of a simpler method of expression, it gives to one and the same audible sign several meanings.

There exists among the lower organisms a mode of reproduction (gemmation) by which an individual first buds and then divides into two or more fragments, each of which becomes itself an individual, exactly resembling, but independent of, the parent form. So in language, one and the same word becomes the bearer of new ideas, each of which finally appropriates the primitive sound, so that we have really so many new words, each endowed with its own life and function, though each is identical in sound with the parent form.\* The language forgets their common origin, and it is only in the artificial catalogues of languages, dictionaries, that they are classed under the same heading, so that we see their derivations from one and the same source.

8. Hence the fact, apparently a very strange one, that the words of the language come to our memory and are under our command in the special acceptation wherein we choose to employ them, and without any need to embarrass ourselves with the multitude of meanings which each of them may bear. If I wish to

<sup>\*</sup> Vide infra, p. 65.

express the idea that such a pupil is at the head of his class, the words head and class occur at once to the mind in the special sense in which I employ them, while I have not for a moment any thought of the many other meanings included by the words head and class. This arises from the fact that the special ideas which I wish to express are attached by the customs of the language which I speak to these words head and class. Other ideas may be bound up with the same two words, but I do not see them at the moment, and consequently I do not think of seeking and considering in these two words the many meanings which they possess, in order to choose those which suit me.

With still stronger reason again, the vocabulary of the language which each of us carries in his head will remain almost entirely latent and as it were asleep in our thought. Those words alone place themselves at our service which express the sole ideas conceived by us at the time; all the rest will disappear, as those innumerable sensations, images and ideas which the incessant activity of our mind has previously evolved disappear at the moment wherein we conceive some particular thought. That is to say, the word, the sonorous sensation which the mind employs as the expression of thought, is subject, like all other elements of sensation, to the laws of the association of ideas.

### II. THE FORMATION OF THE SUBSTANTIVE.

9. Changes of meaning may occur in different parts of speech, most frequently in nouns (substantive and adjective) and verbs; less often in adverbs and prepositions, and least of all in the pronouns.

<del>i-</del>

From our present point of view the grammatical nature of the word matters little, the mental process remains everywhere substantially the same. In the substantive it is more easy to grasp; the substantive, moreover, is that part of speech which presents most changes, and is the most important to study. The analysis of the substantive, therefore, will serve as a starting-point for our research, but it must be understood that whatever is said of it may be applied, with slight modifications, to other kinds of words.

10. Every substantive originally designates an object by a particular quality which defines it; thus the object which we call in Latin furius, a river, presents various characteristic features; the look of the water, the banks, etc., and each of these might serve to give it its name. Amongst many the mind has chosen one, running water, quod fluit, and it has availed itself of this quality to give a name to the object. Or again, that object which is called in French vaisseau, a vessel, from its likeness in form to a great vase, or batiment, that which is built up, in allusion to the work of its

construction, the Latin language calls navem, that which natat, floats upon the water. This particular quality which serves to denote the object is the determinant, so-called because it determines or delimits it, and makes it known by one special character. In capital, capital is the determinant which characterizes something understood, which is delimited, a town or a letter. In fluvius and navis the ideas of flowing and floating are the determinants which specify originally the general things determined, but unexpressed, that which flows or floats. In composite nouns the relations of the determinants to the things determined are seen more clearly because they are both expressed. Thus in coffre-fort, strong box, fort is the determinant which defines the thing determined, coffre.

The choice of a determinant is then the first act of the mind when it denotes an object. It fixes on a quality of this object which strikes it, a quality the name of which will serve as the name of the object.

11. It would seem at first sight that this determining quality must be essential and truly determinative. In popular language it is far from being so.

Thus cahier, quire, is etymologically a group of quatre, four things, O. Fr. caier, caern, cadern, from the Latin quaternum, a group of four (leaves understood).

Carillon, a chime, is also a group of four (bells) (from the Vulgar Latin quadrilionem).

So the word confiture, preserve, is simply a preparation (confectura).

Grand !

Chapelet, a rosary (from chapel or chapeau, a garland), is a little crown (of beads which have been blessed).

So lunettes, spectacles, are simply little moons (lunes.)

Soldat, soldier, is a man paid, soldé, from the Italian soldato, from soldo, a penny.

Tortue, tortoise, is an animal with twisted (tortus) feet.

Nothing in these words indicates etymologically the ideas which seem so essential to us, of leaves to write upon; of bells; of preserved fruits; of beads which have been blessed; of instruments to help the sight; of a warrior; of an animal with a shell, etc.

This is because, in fact, the determinant, as we have said, in serving to denote the object, does not necessarily express its inmost nature. It is not the function of the noun to define the thing, but simply to call up the image of it, and to this end the least sign, however imperfect, however incomplete, is enough, from the moment that those persons who speak the language agree that a relation exists between the sign and the thing signified. Within the last few years the name porte-bonheur, luck-bringer, has been given to a kind of bracelet. Now the word porte-bonheur in no wise explains or defines the object which it designates. A vague idea of a wish, united to the idea of a gift of a bracelet, is enough to make a name.

12. This weakness of characterization in the determinant is, moreover, easily explained. Language has no need to express everything. We shall see indeed hereafter that it cannot express everything.

Of the thoughts which are in the mind it expresses only a few, such as are able to call up the rest. Generally the things determined are understood, and the presence of their names rendered useless, either by the character of the determinants or by the circumstances in which the speakers are at the moment. To take familiar examples: if we hear in conversation the word radical, there is no need to explain whether it means a radical (root) in language, a radical (root) in algebra, a radical in chemistry, or a radical politician. The kind of radical intended is naturally explained by the context.

If in France a servant asks the grocer for a quart of vinegar, the grocer understands that she means a quart, quarter, of a litre. If she asks for a quart of coffee, this, without further explanation, will mean a quarter of a pound.

13. Language, then, denotes objects by the aid of determinants which designate some quality or other in the object. In early times these determinants call up in the mind, first the image of the determinant quality, and subsidiarily of the entire object. When, for instance, we have called the standard of a troop drapeau, the word at first awakens in us the idea of something made of cloth, for drapeau means simply drap, cloth. Then, by applying this word drapeau to the object in question, it ultimately calls up in the mind the complete image

of the standard. Up to this time it expressed a special quality of the object, henceforward it becomes a true substantive.

From this analysis, then, it results that the substantive begins by expressing a quality, it then designates the object by one of its qualities, and ends by being really substantive when it calls up in the mind the complete image of the object, considered as a whole.

14. Thus, the forgetting of the etymological signification is the necessary condition of the formation of the substantive. It is also the fundamental condition of every transformation of meaning.

### III. CHANGES OF MEANING, OR TROPES.

15. The various transformations of meaning in words have been long studied by writers on rhetoric, who have given them the Greek names of tropes ( $\tau\rho\delta\pi\sigma$ s). From the seventeenth century onwards, French grammarians, especially Dumarsais, in a well-known work, have made a detailed analysis of them. But they look at the matter only from the standpoint of style, and not from the more general one of the language. Now the study of this branch, of style, is only a part of the study of the language.

For, when a writer, following the turn of his thought, expresses things in that special manner in which he feels them or sees them, he only obeys the same mental laws as do the people. There is no

difference between the figures of a writer and those of popular speech, except that in the writer they are private experiments, while in the people they are experiments, individual, indeed, in their origin, but adopted by all, consecrated by usage, and become a part of the habits of the language.

- 16. Grammarians have classed various tropes or figures under four heads, which they call by the Greek names, synecdoche, metonymy, metaphor, and catachresis. Catachresis is erroneously included, for it is not a trope, as we shall see further on. But the three other figures of language include most of the changes of meaning.
- 17. I. Synecdoche, from the Greek συνεκδοχή, inclusion, interchanges two terms of unequal extent.
- (1) The genus for the species: bâtiment, building, for navire, a ship; and the species for the genus, as man, for the human being, woman as well as man.
- (2) The plural for the singular: it is said in the Holy Scriptures, i.e. in a book of the Holy Scriptures; and the singular for the plural: to succour the orphan, i.e. orphans.
- (3) The whole for the part: tableau, a tablet, picture, i.e. the subject painted on the canvas; and the part for the whole, a sail, i.e. a ship.
- (4) The common noun for the proper noun: the Queen, i.e. Queen Victoria; and the proper noun for the common noun, as un tartufe, a Simon Pure, for a hypocrite.

This last case has received the barbarous name of autonomasia.

- 18. II. Metonymy, from the Greek μετονομία, properly means change of name, a vague and unmeaning term. Metonymy is, in fact, a figure which consists in taking—
- (1) The cause for the effect: as un engin, an engine, for that which the ingenium has invented; and the effect for the cause, as falling sickness, i.e. a sickness which causes a fall.
- (2) The receptacle for the contents: to drink a glass of milk; and the contents for the receptacle: a convent, i.e. the building which contains the convent, the religious association.
- (3) The place for the product or characteristic feature of the place: Stilton, that is to say, Stilton cheese, and the product or feature of a place for the place itself; Sevenoaks, i.e. the locality in which were seven oaks.
- (4) The sign for the thing signified: the throne rests upon the altar; i.e. royalty is supported by the Church; and the thing signified for the sign, as honoured by royalty, i.e. honoured by the queen.
- (5) The abstract noun for the concrete: it is a shame, i.e. a shameful act; and the concrete for the abstract, dépouiller le vieil homme, to put off the old man, i.e. the disposition previous to the state of grace.
- 19. III. Metaphor, from the Greek μεταφορά, transference, is a figure by which the mind applies to one object the name of another object, on account of some

peculiarity common to both. When the word feuille, leaf, passes from the leaf of a tree to the leaf of a book, it is by metaphor. The common character to which the transition is due is in this case the thinness of two flat objects.

Metaphor sometimes brings together two material objects, as in the example just cited, sometimes compares a material object to a moral fact, and transfers the name of the first to the second; thus, rough, rude, rugged, pass from the material surface to the moral character. We say the health of the soul by a comparison with the health of the body. This is the most frequent use of metaphor.

20. To sum up, synecdoche specializes general meanings and generalizes special meanings. It gives rise to what has been called restriction and extension. Metonymy applies to one object the name of another object which is united to the first by an abiding relation of cause and effect, of sign and thing signified, of the thing containing and the contents, etc. Metaphor has the same result, bringing together two objects between which it discovers the connection of analogy or likeness.

Let us examine these two processes, not from the logical point of view as grammarians, but from the linguistic standpoint, and let us seek to find the course which the language follows when it uses them.

We will first consider the restrictions of meaning in synecdoche.

### IV. SYNECDOCHE. RESTRICTIONS OF MEANING.

21. Suppose we have to express the idea of the raising of Jesus into heaven, the Ascension of Jesus. If we take this expression to pieces, we have first the general term 'ascension,' and this is the thing determined; then the term which restricts the general sense 'Jesus,' that is the determinant. Whose Ascension? that of Jesus. Our ordinary speech says, not the Feast of the Ascension of Jesus, but, the Feast of the Ascension. Now what has taken place here? The determinant is obliterated before the thing determined, and this is enriched by the idea the determinant expressed.

Suppose, now, we have to express the idea of the capital town; town is the thing determined, of which capital is the determinant. What sort of town is this? It is the capital or chief town of the country. But ordinary language says simply 'capital.' Now, in this case the following has happened: the thing determined is obliterated before the determinant, which has become the richer for the idea which the thing determined expressed.

Here, then, are two different processes to which language has recourse. In the permanent contact of the determinant idea with that which is determined, one of them penetrates the other so thoroughly that it is absorbed in it.

A. The determinant absorbs the thing determined.

22. We have numerous examples of this law in the transformation of the adjective into the substantive.

Thus the following substantives are at once recognized as having sprung from adjectives, the thing determined being understood.

Anglaise (for écriture anglaise), English hand-writing.

Bonne (for fille bonne, good maid), a servant, a children's maid.

Blanche (for note blanche, white note), in musical notation, minim.

Bâtarde (for écriture bâtarde, bastard), a kind of hand-writing.

Bas (for bas de chausses, the lower part of drawers), stockings.

Capitale (for lettre capitale, ville capitale), capital letter, town.

Grands, les (for les grands personnages), the grandees. Quarte (for la parade quarte, i.e. quatrième), in fencing, carte.

Noire (for note noire), in musical notation, crotchet. Ronde (for note ronde), in musical notation, semibreve;

(for écriture ronde), round hand-writing.

23. It may happen that in the course of time, the adjective disappears as such, to remain only in the substantive which it has produced. Thus—

L'aube (from L. alba, the white [thing]), the dawn.

L'able (from L. albula, the little white [thing]), the whitebait.

Le baudet (from O. Fr. bald, baud, jolly; lit. the jolly, spirited animal), the male ass.

Le bidet (lit. le petit, the little [horse]), the pony.

La bigorne (lit. l'[enclume] à deux cornes, à deux pointes), a kind of anvil.

Le biscuit (lit. le [pain] deux fois cuit, bread twice baked), the biscuit.

Le bouclier (from O. Fr. l'écu boucler, L. scutum buculare, the shield with a buckle), the shield.

Le foie, the liver.\*

Le fromage (from O. Fr. lait fromage, i.e. L. lac formaticum, milk made into shape), cheese.

Le liège (la [chose] legère, Vulg. L. levium, the light), cork.

La pelouse (la [chose] poilue, velue, velvety), lawn.

La quinte (de toux) (l'accès de la quinte, de la cinquième [heure]), a violent cough, recurring every fifth hour.

Le ramage (le [shant] ramage, de la ramée, the song of birds in the boughs), twittering.

Le sanglier (l'[animal] solitaire, L. singularis, the solitary animal), the wild boar.

\* The Romans were fond of liver stuffed with figs, jecur ficatum in Latin, or simply ficatum. This last word came to mean not only liver made into a paté with figs, but simply liver, and so the various Romance languages drew their word for liver from a derivative of ficus, a fig.

Le velours (ce qui est velu, L. villosum, the rough [cloth]), velvet.

### B. The thing determined absorbs the determinant.

24. Here may be ranked all terms taken in a special meaning by understanding a qualifying or a complementary determinant. Thus:

Bâtiment, properly à building, means a ship, the idea of a building for the sea being understood. Les épices, spices, in Latin species; means aromatic species. succès (Latin successus, issue) is a favourable issue. garnement was at first any ornament, good as well as bad; in our days it has a special and bad application. L'école, school, for one set of people means the Ecole Normale, for another the École Polytechnique, for another the École Centrale, etc., according as the speakers are pupils at one or another of these. Le rosaire, rosary (L. rosarium), is a crown of roses, i.e. of beads which have been blessed. Le sermon (L. sermo), is not only a conversation, but a religious conversation. Le couvent (L. conventus), is not any assembly, but an assembly of monks or nuns. Conversion is properly a change, but this change has regard to religion.

Le poulain was the young of any animal, it has become especially the young of the horse. Pondre (L. ponere) was at first to deposit, before the sense became to deposit eggs. Traire had the same sense as tirer (L. trahere) to draw, before being restricted to the sense traire la vache, to milk the cow. Sevrer (L. sepa-

rare) was to separate anything, and not only to separate or wean the child from the mother. Guérir was to protect, and not simply to bring back the sick to health.

In all these cases, and many other analogous to them, the special idea indicating the determinant and restricting the general sense of the term has become understood; and since usage has always caused it to be understood under the general term, it has lost the original meaning.

25. This restricted meaning, the determinant being understood, is frequent in familiar use.

Popular language says, C'est un homme, That is a man; i.e. un homme énergique, a vigorous man; Vous m'en direz des nouvelles, You will tell me news about it; i.e. de bonnes nouvelles, good news. In the sixteenth century it was common to say, Il raisonne comme un tambour mouillé, He reasons like a wet drum, qui ne résonne pas, which does not sound (by a play on the words raisonner and résonner, to imply that he argues badly). The adjective mouillé, wet, a necessary determinant if ever there was one, by degrees penetrated into the word tambour, so that at the last it disappeared altogether, and we now say Il raisonne comme un tambour. In the same way, Sot comme un panier percé, As stupid as a basket with holes in it, became Sot comme un panier, As foolish as a basket; Triste comme un bonnet de nuit sans coiffe, As melancholy as a nightcap without a tassel, was reduced to Triste comme un bonnet de nuit, As melancholy as a nightcap.

Again, by the disappearance of the determinant we must explain the expression canard, in the sense of a lie. The sixteenth, and indeed the seventeenth century, said, figuratively, Donner, vendre à quelqu'un un canard à moitié, To give or to sell half a duck, making it pass for a whole duck, to mean to deceive a person, make him believe something; hence, Donner ou vendre un canard à quelqu'un, To give or sell any one a duck, and by a new simplification we get C'est un canard, a deceit, a lie, a bit of false news.

In popular language all terms of insult, all expressions of passion and anger to which the feelings give strength, show this absorption of the determinant. Into words expressing some vague idea, the people put just whatever feeling they please. Thus, they put into a number of words all they feel of passion, hatred, and disdain. The determinant is felt, not expressed, and is only indicated by the accent of the voice, as canaille! coquin! animal! etc.

26. Thus, to sum up, the mind conceives in permanent contact two ideas,—that of a thing determined, and that of the determinant. Language may never have expressed more than one, or may, after having expressed both of them, have suppressed one of them. It is enough that the contact should simply exist in thought. Of these two ideas brought together, one, whether it be the first or second, ends by being absorbed in the other, so as to restrict its extension.

### V. EXTENSION OF MEANING.

27. There is no need to define these words, which are at once intelligible. Thus there is extension when panier, a basket, from L. panarium (from panis, bread), passes from the meaning of basket of bread to the general sense of basket; when boucher, a butcher in the sense of the seller of goats' flesh (bouc, goat), comes to mean a seller of flesh in general; when payer quelqu'un (from the Latin pacare aliquem), to satisfy him, and keep him quiet, by giving him what he is owed, ends in the expression payer ses dettes, to pay one's debts.

Indeed, in order that an extension may be possible, the etymological sense must be forgotten, so that the word may become equal to the thing designated. The idea of pain, bread, must have disappeared before panier could be applied to any kind of basket. Payer must express only the act of rendering to any one his due, and lose the sense of satisfying, in order to give rise to the expression payer ses dettes.

This is the process we have discovered in the formation of nouns. We find the same in metaphor; indeed extension is a kind of metaphor, whereof the second term designates a general object specified in the first term.

#### VI. METONYMY.

28. Metonymy, as we have seen, comprises two notions united together by a constant relation. It

is very commonly used. It for the most part gives abstract terms a concrete meaning. Thus the greater number of French substantives in *-ement*, designate in the first place the verbal abstract action expressed by the radical, and, by metonymy, the concrete result of the action.

Ameublement, the act of furnishing, and, by metonymy, the collective furniture.

Amusement, the act of amusing, and that which amuses.

Assaisonnement, the act of seasoning, and that which seasons.

Attroupement, the act of massing in troops, and so troops.

Bâtiment, the act of building, and the edifice built.

Cautionnement, the act of giving a pledge, and so the sum spent to that end.

By metonymy the number of participial substantives, i.e. those formed from participles, and of verbal substantives, i.e. made from the verbal radical, pass from an abstract to a concrete meaning.

Allée, entrée, sortie, issue, the act of going, entering, coming out; whence, the way by which we go and come, the place by which we enter, or leave, etc.

Conserve, relief, pli, dépêche, avance, décor, etc., the act of preserving, removing (the remains of a meal); folding, despatching, advancing (money, etc.), decorating, etc. Whence, conserves alimentaires, preserved foods; relief, the remainder of a meal; un pli cacheté, a sealed letter; une dépêche télégraphique, a telegraphic

despatch; des avances d'argent, sums of money advanced; décors de théâtre, the scenery of a theatre, etc.

In metonymy, as in extension, we shall find the same process of thought. Of the two terms united by this constant relation which the mind includes at first in one view, the first one is soon lost from sight by language, which only retains the name to designate the second, and considers this second alone.

### VII. METAPHOR.

- 29. Metaphor, as we have seen above, transfers the name of one object to another, thanks to some character common to both. The leaf, feuille, of a tree, gives its name to a leaf of a book because of the thinness which is the characteristic of both. In most cases, one of these two terms is material, and the second abstract. The process of metaphor comprises two periods, the one in which metaphor is still visible and in which the name, while designating the second object, calls up the image of the first; the other in which, through forgetfulness of the first image, the name designates only the second object, and becomes adequate to do so.
- 30. I. In the earlier of these periods, metaphor carries the thought over two series of parallel facts, explaining one by the other. This is metaphor, properly so called, the only one consciously employed by a writer, the

only one which gives to his style brilliancy, colour, and picturesqueness. It keeps the mind on the alert, by causing it to seize, in a rapid comparison, different relations between the object of its thought and the object to which it is compared. Among the many examples which abound in every writer, we will cite one only from Victor Hugo.

Pensive one day I strayed on the brink of an open gulf Between two promontories,

And I saw on the sand a serpent, yellow and green, Jaspered with black stains.

The axe into twenty morsels had cut alive The body which the wave bathed,

And the foam of the sea, which the wind cast on it, Floated rose coloured on its blood.

All its vermeil rings crawled as they entwined On the lonely shore,

And the blood empurpled with a more burning red Its toothed crest.

These morsels, torn, scattered, ready to exhaust Their failing strength,

Were seeking, ever seeking, as for a kiss Two shuddering mouths.

And as I dreamed, sad, and praying God In my mute pity,

The head with thousand teeth opened its eye of fire, And said to me: "O Poet,

Lament thyself alone, thine evil is more envenomed, Thy wound more cruel;

For thine Albaydé in the tomb has shut Her fair gazelle-like eyes.

This axe-stroke has also broken thy young flight. Thy life and thy thought Round a memory, chaste and last treasure, Drag dispersedly.

Thy genius in its large flight vehement, gracious, That, better than the swallow, Now shaved the ground, then in the sky Gave beatings of swift wings,

Now, like me, dies near the troubled floods, And its force is extinguished, Powerless to reunite its mutilated fragments, Which crawl and bleed," \*

- \* Un jour, pensif, j'errais au bord d'un golfe ouvert Entre deux promontoires,
  - Et je vis sur le sable un serpent jaune et vert, Jaspé de taches noires.
  - La hache en vingt tronçons avait coupé vivant Son corps que l'onde arrose,
  - Et l'écume des mers que lui jetait le vent Sur son sang flottait rose.
  - Tous ses anneaux vermeils rampaient en se tordant Sur la grève isolée,
  - Et le sang empourprait d'un rouge plus ardent Sa crête dentelée.
  - Ces tronçons déchirés, épars, près d'épuiser Leurs forces languissantes,
  - Se cherchaient, se cherchaient, comme pour un baiser Deux bouches frémissantes!
  - Et comme je rêvais, triste et suppliant Dieu Dans ma pitié muette,
  - La tête aux mille dents rouvrit son œil de feu, Et me dit: "O poète!

We have not here to study metaphor in style, we have not to see how, according to his own peculiar way of feeling and seeing things, the thought of a writer takes different colours and clothes itself in material forms. Such a study, it may be said in passing, would show which part in the creation of each sentence is due on the one hand to the clear vision of external things, the imagination, and which on the other to the analysis of purely abstract ideas, that is to say, to reason. The varying proportions of these two elements, of which, now the reason, now the imagination is dominant, form one of the most important characteristics in the style of different writers. And, again, in the imagination itself we can discover

Ne plains que toi ; ton mal est plus envenimé, Ta plaie est plus cruelle ; Car ton Albaydé dans la tombe a fermé

Ses beaux yeux de gazelle.

Ce coup de hache aussi brise ton jeune essor. Ta vie et tes pensées

Autour d'un souvenir, chaste et dernier trésor, Se trainent dispersées.

Ton génie, au vol large, éclatant, gracieux, Qui, mieux que l'hirondelle, Tantôt rasait la terre et tantôt dans les cieux Donnait de grands coups d'aile,

Comme moi maintenant, meurt près des flots troublés; Et ses forces s'éteignent, Sans pouvoir réunir ses tronçons mutilés Qui rampent et qui saignent." various aspects and various ways of considering the exterior world and comparing it with the abstract thoughts to be expressed. Such a study, rigorously and methodically pursued, allows us to penetrate more intimately into the secrets of the style of great writers, and to trace, if I may so say, its genesis and philosophy.

From the more practical point of view of the art of writing, we have still to show the possible abuse of metaphor, the danger involved in it to accuracy and clearness of thought, the risk of blurring the idea for the sake of the form, and the reality for the appearance. Comparaison n'est pas raison, Analogy is not argument, says the proverb; and this saying may be exactly applied to metaphor. Precision of thought may be lost in the series of comparisons wherein it is enwrapped. But these various studies are confined to criticism and rhetoric, they have nothing to do with the study of language.

31. II. In the second period, the comparison with the first object is forgotten by the mind, which sees the second term alone. Thus, when we say, a leaf of a book, we see only the simple image of paper, we have lost from sight the leaf of a tree which has given it its name. Only on reflection can we find the metaphors in a number of expressions, material or abstract, such as poutre, a beam (lit., a mare); chevalet, an easel (lit., little horse); bourdon, a pilgrim's staff (lit., a mule); corbeau, a bracket (lit., a crow); grue, a

crane; bélier, a battering-ram; etc., and such words as inclination; penchant, tendency; appetit; esprit, spirit (lit., breath); penser, to think (lit., peser, to weigh), etc. The word becomes simple by the forgetting of its earlier meaning.

# VIII. FORGETTING, OR CATACHRESIS.

32. Thus, in the formation of nouns which pass from the adjective to the substantive state; in the restriction of meaning which absorbs the determinant in the thing determined, or the thing determined in the determinant; in the metonymies which transfer the name of an object to that of a neighbouring object, united to the former by a constant relation; in the extensions and metaphors which make us give the name of a first object, soon lost to sight, to a second object, sometimes of the same nature, but more generally of a different nature,-everywhere the condition of the change is our forgetting of the first term, and our consideration of the second alone. This forgetting has received from grammarians the name of catachresis, that is to say, mis-use. Grammarians who have not recognized its true character find misuse of language in this fact of a complete transference of the name of one object to another, at the risk of the most obvious contradictions. They have thus marked as strange, expressions such as un cheval ferré d'argent, a horse ironed (shod) with silver; un pavé en bois, a wood pavement, since ferrer

obviously means to furnish with iron, and pavé, paving stone, a cubic mass of stone.

They have not seen that this forgetting of the first etymological signification is the very law which governs every change of meaning. Without this forgetting the new designation always remains bound to its root; catachresis alone detaches it. No one uttering the word drapeau, a standard, thinks of the primitive meaning pièce de DRAP, a piece of cloth. word here has become co-extensive with the thing. is the same with all the examples hitherto quoted, and indeed with all substantives in general. Etymological research consists precisely in finding behind the word that special quality which has made it denominate the thing. Biche, a hind, is now a simple substantive; but originally it meant a wild beast, bestia; sanglier, a wild boar, is a name co-extensive with the animal which it implies; originally it was singularis, the solitary animal. No one sees in bouclier, a buckler, anything but the image of a shield, and yet the buckler began by being the buckled shield, ornamented with a buckle having a central boss, L. scutum buculare, and so with a thousand others.

Catachresis has made pure substantives of them, as it ultimately effaces in every figure the first term of the comparison, and with it the comparison itself. Catachresis is the act by which the word is emancipated. It is, in the process of gemmation, the separation of the bud from the parent form.\* Thus understood, it becomes one of the living forces of language.

<sup>•</sup> Vide supra, p. 41.

33. This forgetfulness is brought about in a very simple manner. The mind, at first struck by the relation which the second object presents to the first, having embraced them under the same aspect and designated them under the same name, attaches itself little by little to the second object, identifies more and more completely with it the name borrowed from the first, and ends by making this name the exact sign and faithful representation of the new object. Habit alone then brings about this forgetfulness of primitive meaning and the complete adaptation of the old name to the new thing. Catachresis is the daughter of use and time.

34. From this follows an important consequence: that metaphorical expression may, for certain persons, have become by catachresis the adequate expression of new objects, while for others they have kept all the transparency of their etymological value.

For a Frenchman, cornet calls up the simple image of a bit of paper rolled up into a point. A foreigner studying the language will see in it "a little horn."

The Germ. Würfel exactly corresponds for the Germans with the French word  $d\acute{e}$ , (die, the singular of dice). For a Frenchman studying German, it will call up the image of an object which is thrown, geworfen. It is the same with a number of words which a greater or less use reduces more or less completely to one image alone.

Thus, in all languages, there are words which do not

express the same idea to all, as they do not call up the same image to all; a notable fact which well explains many misunderstandings and errors. We touch here on a capital point in the life of language considered as the expression of thought. The fact which we remark is only a particular case of a more general fact, the relations of words to the images which they call up. More generally, in each one of us, words which designate material objects awaken by the side of the general image of the object a group of secondary images, more or less obliterated, which tinge the principal image with their own hues, varying according to the individual. The fortuitous circumstances of education, reading, travel, of the thousand impressions which form the web of our mental existence, have made us associate such and such words or collective expressions with such and such images and collective sensations. Hence, a whole world of vague impressions, of indistinct sensations live in the unconscious depths of our thoughts, a sort of obscure dream which each of us carries in him. But words, rough interpreters of these inner worlds, allow only an infinitely small part of them to appear externally, those which are the most apparent and the most easily seized, and these are received by the listener, who in his turn gives to them the various fugitive and shifting aspects with which the basis of his own imagination furnishes him. Thus appears the imperfection of that instrument by which men exchange their thoughts with each other, -of that instrument which is in every other aspect so wonderful,—language.

Thus each of us bears about with him a world of ideas and thoughts which remain in the subjective state, and which he is almost powerless to convey to others. Our daily life furnishes us with numerous cases. us give an example to make our meaning clear. us suppose we ask a group of people to represent naturally, without attempt at imagination, the picture which these simple words suggest: an overhanging rock on the sea-coast. If these persons compare with each other the pictures which the words call up, it is nearly certain that no one of them will resemble another. The form of the rock, the look of the shore. and of the waves, will vary with the different individuals, and that because antecedent impressions have determined, in each of them, a different mode of thinking of the objects in question.\*

In psychology the study of sensation is little advanced, when compared with the study of the intelligence and the will; because the terms employed, inclination, penchant, désir, passion, affection, inclination, fancy, desire, passion, affection, etc., are metaphorical terms which affect each of us differently, and which each of us translates differently. One of the principal causes, in our opinion, of the obscurity of German philosophy is the excess of metaphor in the language. Compare such picturesque words calling

<sup>\*</sup> Cf. Galton, "Generic Images," in the Nineteenth Century, vol. vi., p. 157.

up images as Anschauung, Empfindung, Vorstellung, Begriff, etc., with those terms bare and abstract, intuition, perception, aperception, idée, etc.\* one case these terms, exactly represent pure abstractions, in the other they are metaphorical terms which strike each reader with special sensations; in the one case ideas, in the other personal subjective impressions. In the one case the reader has only to understand, in the other he has to translate them according to the special turn of his imagination, as it has been developed by his education and his intellectual life. For this reason, in certain philosophies to which our age has given birth, the master has seldom recognized his doctrine in his disciples; they do not understand him, and each one has accepted the teaching after his own fashion.

On the other hand, this imperfection of language allows the writer to reveal himself. It is because language does express and does display but a feeble part of this subjective world, that there exists an art of writing. If language were the expression of thought, and not a more or less happy attempt at such expression, there would be no art in good phraseology; language would be a natural fact, like breathing and the circulation of the blood, or like the association of ideas.

<sup>\*</sup> It may be said, in passing, that to scholastic terms and Low Latin, French owes the incomparable clearness and precision which it gives to philosophic language. The terms are almost all abstract, save in the terminology of sensation, and afford no ground for those errors which metaphorical expressions introduce.

But, owing to that imperfection, we make an effort to get a grip of our thought in all its turnings, in its inmost folds, and to render it better, and hence arises the work of the writer. Felix culpa, let us say, since it is to this that nations owe their literature, the admirable treasure constantly augmented by great works which are the eternal honour of humanity.

### IX. COMPLEX MODIFICATIONS.

35. We have studied the transformations of meanings under their simplest form. But this simplicity is rarely found in language; it generally gives place to far more complex forms, which we must analyze.

These may be reduced to two kinds, which we may call rayonnement, radiation, and enchaînement, concatenation; but these are generally mixed and combined.

# 36. A. Radiation.

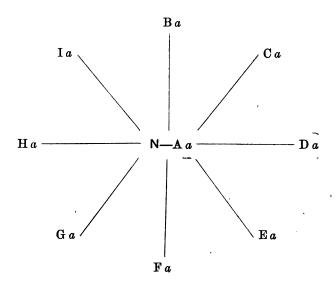
Radiation takes place when an object gives its name to a series of other objects, because of the same character common to all. The name radiates from the primitive object to all the others.

Examples.—Racine. The name racine, root of a plant, passes to racine, root of a word, of an evil, of an algebraic quantity, because the word, the evil, the algebraic quantity, are each considered as the development of a primitive element which is compared to the root of a plant. Dent, tooth, gives its name in conse-

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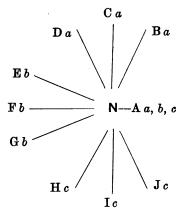
quence of a likeness of form, to the tooth of a saw, to the dent, sprig, of dentelle, lace, etc.

Suppose N, in the following diagram, to be the name of an object A, and suppose a some quality or other which is noticeable in A; the name N, which is given to A, will be transferred to other objects, B, C, D, E, F, G, etc., thanks to the same quality a, which, among others, each of these objects possesses. The following diagram will serve to explain the matter:—



37. Sometimes language considers in an object called N, two, three, or more qualities, a, b, c, and thus the name N is transferred to several series of objects,

one series having in common with A one quality, a, the second series having another quality, b, the third another quality, c, and so on, as in the following diagram:—



For example, la tête, head, considered as the chief and upper extremity of the body, will be employed thus figuratively: tête de ligne, terminus, tête de pont, end of a bridge, etc. Considered in its physical form it will be employed as tête d'épingle, tête de marteau, head of a pin, of a hammer, etc. Considered as the seat of thought, it will give rise to the expression avoir de la tête, to have a good head on one's shoulders; une tête faible, to be weak-minded, etc.

Arbre, the tree, gives different meanings; arbre de couche, driving shaft, in allusion to the trunk; l'arbre généalogique, a genealogical tree, in allusion to the division of the branches.

La queue, the tail, considered as an appendage of the body, will give la queue d'un parti, cf. "a joint of O'Connell's tail;" considered as a long thin line, it will give rise to the term la queue, the line at the door of a theatre: and so in a thousand other cases.

# 38. B. Concatenation.

In concatenation the primitive meaning of the word is forgotten in the second object. Then the name passes from the second object to the third by the aid of a new character, which in its turn is forgotten, and so on.

Example.—Mouchoir, handkerchief. The first meaning is the object with which a man wipes his nose (from moucher, Lat. muccare). Our modern customs have accidentally decided that the object should be a square piece of stuff, silk, cotton, cambric, etc. Hence, through forgetfulness of the original idea, and from a consideration of the form of the object alone, the word mouchoir is applied to pieces of stuff of the same kind, as in the phrase se mettre un mouchoir autour du cou, to put a handkerchief round the neck. The handkerchief which women tie round their necks falls in a triangular point on the shoulders. We have, then, to consider it in a new character whence comes the meaning which mouchoir takes in seafaring language, that of a triangular piece of wood.

Suppose N be the name mouchoir, A the object, a the characteristic quality which has created the name N, this name N will then be transferred to the object B,

neck-handkerchief, on account of the quality b common to the pocket and neck-handkerchief, i.e. the being a small square of light stuff. This same name N will pass from B to C (a triangular piece of wood), on account of the new quality, c common to B and C (the triangular form). Hence the following scheme:—



Similarly, by a series of consecutive forgettings, and by another series of common characters, toilette after having meant petite toile, a small cloth, and especially a small white cloth which covers a washhand-stand, comes to mean the washhand-stand, the whole group of objects useful for dressing, the dress, etc. Bureau, étoffe de bure, a stuff of baize or thick green cloth, designates a writing table covered with this cloth, any piece of furniture for writing, the room in which such furniture is found, the people in the room, etc. romance, meant in France in the Middle Ages a book composed in the Romance language, that is to say, in French; and as the compositions most in honour were chansons de geste, it took the special meaning of a chanson de geste, or epic of great deeds. At the end of the Middle Ages it meant a chanson de geste turned into prose, a romance of chivalry, i.e. a story in prose of certain great imaginary adventures; next, a story in prose of any imaginary adventures, then, any imaginary story. We should not easily discover under this last evolution of meaning, poetry written in the Romance language.

In the words un caractère ombrageux, a touchy person, none would recognize its origin, ombrage, a shadow, if we did not find the intermediate link, le cheval ombrageux, a shy horse who starts at his own shadow. The relation between the ramage, babble of a child, and un rameau (ramus), a bough, is the remembrance of the birds which twitter on the twig. La plume, or pen (of steel) with which I write these lines, has no visible links with the plume or feather of the bird.

39. The characters b, c, d, e, etc., which cause the transference of the name N successively to the object B, C, D, E, F, etc., may be of any kind, and in general have no relation to each other. Being unimportant they may be contradictory, and bring about absurdities which are, however, but apparent. We have already instanced cheval ferré d'argent, pavé en bois. There would seem to be a contradiction between ferré and argent, between pavé and bois. But as a fact ferré no longer means furnished with iron, but furnished with an object of a special form which is always called fer (à cheval), a horse shoe, but from which the idea of iron has disappeared. Pavé does not now indicate the stone which constitutes the pavement, but any hard and compact mass used to cover the roadway.

Other examples are cadran, a dial; chasser, to turn out. The etymology of cadran is the Lat. quadrantem,

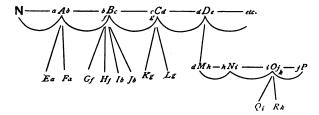
a rectangular surface, whereas our dials are circular. The word chasser comes from the popular Lat. captiare, to try to catch. We now use the word for getting rid of troublesome people, or sending away bad servants.

But in these cases there is no contradiction in the thought. The first dials were sun-dials with a rectangular surface. They were so called in consequence of a secondary character, the geometrical form of the surface. Next the etymological sense was forgotten, and cadran meant a surface on which the hours were specified. When clocks, watches etc., came into general use, the name of cadran was applied to the enamelled face which showed the hours. As chance would have it, the face was circular, but the mind did not trouble itself with the idea of its geometric form.

Between chasser, to hunt, the stag or other game, and chasser, to turn away a troublesome person, we find the intermediate link chasser as applied to the enemy in battle, since we seek either to catch him as game, or to put him to flight as a troublesome person.

40. Radiation and concatenation are generally mixed and combined.

A scheme such as the following may be given, which, after the foregoing explanations, will be found perfectly clear in spite of its apparent complexity.



The name N will thus pass, by successive branching in different directions, from the object A to all the objects B, C, D, . . . Q, R, etc.

Take, for example, timbre. If we open Littre's Dictionary we find the following meanings and classifications of the word.

- (1) The timbre of a drum, a cord of gut doubly stretched over the lower portion of a drum in order to strengthen the sound.
- (2) A bell without a clapper, which is struck from without by a hammer.
  - (3) The sound given out by this timbre.
  - (4) The sonorous quality of a voice or an instrument.
- (5) The character of a sound independent of its pitch and intensity; a character depending on the harmonics which co-exist with the fundamental sound.
- (6) The first words of a well-known ballad, written above other words to indicate the air to which these last may be sung.
- (7) A mark stamped on paper which the law renders obligatory for legal documents, and for certain other printed matter.
  - (8) A private mark stamped by each post-office upon

letters, showing the place and date of despatch and the place and day of arrival.

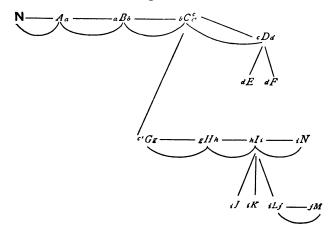
- (9) A postage-stamp.
- (10) A building term, the summary of each separate piece of work, together with its cost, placed in the margin of a specification.
  - (11) The crest of a helmet.
- (12) Any ornaments placed above the shield in armorial bearings, and serving to designate the rank of the person who bears them; tiara and red hat, mitre and crozier, cap of maintenance, helmet, etc.

We will now class these meanings in the order of their development,\* and we shall have first timbre, N, from the vulgar Lat. tympanum, timbanum, a drum (A). Drum, by concatenation, gives the cord which resounds in the drum (B). Thence through the idea of resonance, the bell without the clapper struck from without by a hammer (C). Here the meaning divides itself into two. In the bell we may consider on the one hand the tone, and on the other hand its rounded form.

If we follow the first division, the sound of the bell, we have by concatenation the resonant quality of the sound (D): and thence by radiation—1. The physical character of sound, the combination of harmonics with their fundamental tone (E); 2. The words of one ballad put above another to point out the tune (F), thus ending the first series.

\* Cf. the "Dictionnaire général de la langue française," by Ad. Hatzfeld and the author (in the press).

Now we come to the second. The round form of the timbre leads us to the round part of the helmet (G), and next to the ornaments which were characteristic of nobility (H). These ornaments led in their turn to the official mark placed on certain papers (I). Thence we get bureau du timbre (J), instrument à timbre (K), timbre-poste, timbre-quittance (L, M), and lastly, the representative sign comes from the timbre officiel, (N); hence the following scheme:—



### X. Conclusion.

41. Such are the logical processes employed by our thought in order to effect the transformation of words. At one time it modifies the extension of a term by absorbing the determinant in the thing determined, or the thing determined in the determinant. At another

it extends a word to different objects, according to some constant relation (metonymy), or to an analogy (metaphor), which it finds between the object designated and these different objects.

The first processes generally give fulness and precision to the expression, and condense two ideas into one. The others lend it a distinctness which takes hold of the imagination. Of these processes metaphor plays much the most important part. It is not content with substituting for the dry abstraction or simple expression of a fact, the colour and the brightness of a picture, but above all it allows language to express abstract ideas.

42. The mind does not think only of material objects which strike the senses, but at the same time, of a number of abstract ideas conceived by its own activity. Whether it turns in upon itself and analyzes the soul, its faculties, its sensuous, intellectual, and moral activity; or whether it looks above itself and above the world, and contemplates the causes of phenomena, their effects, and their laws; or whether it raises itself to the notion of the absolute, it revolves within itself thousands of invisible, intangible thoughts. municates these to others by metaphor. This alone can allow each man to fathom the thought of men like himself. In no language is there any abstract word which, if we knew its etymology, would not resolve itself into a concrete word. And a priori the necessity of this is evident. When men created language,

they could not but attach to special sounds the images of material objects, otherwise it would have been absolutely impossible for them to exchange ideas. could have no common intermediary which would permit them to make the exchange except the material world exterior to their mind. These concrete words, these images of material objects, gradually became the They dropped their signs of ideas less concrete. grosser significations in order to recall to the mind only the abstract notion which was hidden beneath them. If we consider the accumulation through the ages of this work of thought and language, idealizing its images more and more, and analyzing thought and feeling more closely, we shall be able to account for the facility which languages have gained of expressing abstract ideas. But beneath the immense edifice of abstract thought, reflection and observation will easily recognize the sensuous foundation of material images.

43. We may rightly admire this power of language, which with materials so feeble, has constructed so vast an edifice. It is as the coral animalcule, which, by the incessant action of microscopic forces repeated a million times, finally forms firm land. And our admiration still increases, when by a final analysis we get back to the earliest elements of the processes we have studied.

Everywhere as the ultimate end of change we find two intellectual co-existing elements, the one principal, the other accessory. After a long while

and by an unconscious path, the mind loses sight of the first, and only considers the second, which either drives out the other or restricts its value. Under cover of the same physiological fact,—the word, the mind passes from one idea to another.

44. Now this unconscious process carrying the dominant fact from the principal to the accessory detail is the very law of transformation which obtains in the moral world. The history of religions, of social institutions, of politics, jurisprudence, and moral ideas, may be reduced to that slow process which causes the unconscious habits of the mind to forget the primary fact, to see the secondary fact alone which is derived from it, and to make of it a primary fact which in its turn will disappear before its insensibly increasing successor. This evolution is the very law of organic development in living beings, since the changes in life are almost reducible to the gradual disappearance of the fundamental cell in the presence of its neighbouring cell, in which it is gradually merged, and which is developed at its expense.

#### CHAPTER III.

#### PSYCHOLOGICAL ACTION.

45. We have seen the different ways in which meanings are changed. In asking what are the causes of change, we touch on the most obscure and most difficult questions connected with semantics.\* New words express new things, facts, ideas, feelings, or else are new ways of translating old ones. The development of new words is, therefore, the echo of those changes which affect the thought of a people or its mode of feeling, and the science of the signification of its words is, then, a part of the history of its psychology. this science it has been said that as yet hardly. anything but the name has been created. Indeed, the domain is so vast, the facts so numerous, that all efforts up to this time have hardly begun it. creation of the science presents considerable difficulties is evident, but it is by no means certain that they are insuperable.

In fact the hindrance to research is the unexpected number of facts which we have to study. The actions which modify the meanings of words are so innumer-

\* This word is derived from the Gr. σημαίνειν, to denote; and signifies the science of change of meanings.

able that we find ourselves in the presence of facts which appear to need an equal number of special explanations. Every separate change seems to be due to a separate cause, and consequently all scientific arrangement seems hopeless.

But the case of meteorology is the same. During the first half of this century we had no hope of accomplishing anything further than the compilation of a vast catalogue of isolated facts. And yet, although meteorology is not yet a completely constituted science, no one would maintain that the infinitely complex determinism which regulates its phenomena will not one day be reduced to a more restricted number of inflexible laws.

46. Another objection which touches the very basis of this problem may be perhaps suggested. Neologisms, like other phenomena of language, have as their usual In fact, of whatever kind causes individual actions. these may be, whether phonetic, morphological, or syntactical, whether of words or meanings, all linguistic changes have as their first origin some personal and therefore it would seem arbitrary action. They are the work of an individual will, but as soon as the will intervenes in the production of phenomena, they are taken out of the scope of science; since the only object of science is to determine the simple causes which lie under the multiplicity of phenomena. But we must not forget that if linguistic changes, and in particular changes of meaning, presuppose personal

causes, they have no chance of permanence except when they find agreement of feeling and thinking on the part of the multitude which then accepts the neologism. There must be accordance between the psychological state of the author and that of the people, or the neologism does not live. It comes into existence, sometimes flares for a moment, but dies like a rapid meteor, without leaving durable traces.

47. The first question is that of method, i.e. what general classification we should adopt. The facts, as we have said above, seem to divide into two groups: changes of meaning due to objective causes exterior to the mind, i.e. historical causes;—changes of meaning due to subjective causes within the mind.

If any one desires to grapple with this question, he should, then, begin by grouping in the same class all those figurative expressions which designate historical facts. The study of this group will throw light on the history of ideas and facts among the people.

The second group will include the expressions of general ideas and feelings common not to such and such a people, but to the larger part of the peoples in the same state of civilization, and here we shall closely touch on the more general questions of popular psychology. We will take some examples in each of these groups.

# I. HISTORICAL CHANGES.

48. One of the most remarkable historical facts which transformed Latin civilization was the rise of Chris-

It introduced a vast number of new ideas and new facts, for which it had to find names. Here, then, a combined philological and psychological study might be attempted on the influence exercised by the Church on Low Latin, and consequently on the Romance: Thus, religio, religion, cultus Deorum, for languages. Cicero, becomes for St. Jerome cultus Dei. To designate the creation and the Creator, recourse was had to creatio. conditio, factura, creator, conditor, factor. Created beings are the creature. The Saviour is Salvator, Redemptor. Miracles are miracula, virtutes, signa. Tentator becomes the name of Satan, and his work is designated by tentare, tentatio, tentamentum. Devotio, ædificatio, abnegatio, indulgentia, transgressio, prævaricatio, remissio, demissio, vocatio, conversio, gloria, oratio, prædicatio, peregrinus, reliquiæ, etc., are a number of Latin words which must marvel at themselves when forced to yield ideas hitherto unknown-and to which the triumph of the Church will secure the most brilliant and most lasting career.

In the Latin of the Middle Ages we may study the effects of new historical changes. The feudal terms, those of political institutions, of law and education, of the schools and the sciences, of trivium and quadrivium, of medicine and astrology, offer the philosophical linguist a number of curious facts for analysis and reflection. Thus in every idiomatic language there are many words which, though colourless in the speech of those who now pronounce them, become again luminous under the scrutinizing gaze of the historian, and,

in the revelation of their history, tell us at the same time of bygone manners and of a bygone civilization.

Take, for instance, the word parole; \* in its present meaning it teaches us nothing. But in its etymology we at once see the Christian parabola, the preaching of the Gospel and the marvellous renascence of a decaying world.

The introduction of Oriental manners and of an Oriental court by Diocletian leaves a trace in le baile, le baili (governor), that is to say, in the bajulus,† the portefaix, or porter, of Rome, whose wife or bajula became the nurse of the Imperial infant. The fosterfather, raised in dignity, becomes the tutor of the young prince, and with him the humble porter mounts to power.

All the ancient and warlike royalty of the Merovingians appears in *la cour*, that is to say, the court or enclosures, the *cohortem* ‡ or farm-yard of the Romans;

<sup>\*</sup> Parole, in Provençal paraula, older form paraula, in Spanish palabra, older form parabla, is a Romance word from the popular Lat. parabola. Parabola, a moral sentiment, has been substituted for verbum. In a sense nearly allied to its primitive meaning we still say in French Ce n'est pas parole d'évangile.

<sup>†</sup> The word bajulus meant in the classic period a carrier of burdens; towards the end of the Empire it had the simple meaning of one who carries. St. Jerome uses it with the meaning of the bearer of a letter. At the Imperial Court, with the new organization of the officials, the nurse who carried the infant had the official title bajula, and her husband, together with the title bajulus, became tutor to the young prince. Hence the transition to the designation of any powerful person was easy. In Italian the word bagliva still exists with the meaning of power.

In Merovingian Lat. curtem, i.e., cortem, from cohortem, the farm-yard.

in their connétable,\* the chief of the stables, and in the maréchal, the guardian of the horses, or servant of the stables; and in la ville, that is to say, the villa, I the small farm. All the miseries of the Middle Ages are revealed in the word chétif, § feeble (from Lat. captivum), the creature incapable of offering resistance, the serf, the slave; or in boucher, the seller of goats'-flesh, the food of the people in those times of want. see feudalism declining with the vaslet || or varlet, the young vassal degraded into the modern valet, and the middle classes rising with the humble minister, or servant, who becomes the ministre de l'état, or minister of state. The history of the changes of the sense of the word livre, from the Lat. libra, would be the complete history of our money from the time of the Carolingians till the nineteenth century.

The history of manners and beliefs are indicated in the changes of meaning presented by the words libertin, honnête homme, dame, demoiselle, maîtresse.¶ The progress in the material conditions of existence appear

- \* Connétable, conestabulus, altered from comestabulus, i.e. comes stabuli, count or chief of the stable.
  - † From the O.G. marah-scalc, i.e. horse (marah) -servant (scalc)-
- ‡ Villa in Latin, so late as the Merovingian times, meant farm. The ville, town, developed itself round the farm or castle.
- § Chétif in the Middle Ages still meant prisoner; cf. the derived English word caitiff.
  - || Vasselet is contracted to vaslet, whence valet.
- I Libertin, now a libertine, honnête homme, now an honest man, meant in the seventeenth century free-thinker, gentleman; dame and demoiselle denoted certain degrees of social rank; mattresse has undergone precisely the same change of sense as the English mistress.

with the new meaning of viande, meat, which, from food in general, came to mean the food derived from the flesh of animals. Progress in general education is attested by the word librairie, library, now bookseller's shop, which leaves the hall of the convent or palace to establish itself on the public street.

But what must we think of the marchand de nouveautés, who no longer sells books as he did in the first half of the century up till 1840, but stuffs in the newest fashion?

### II. PSYCHOLOGICAL MODIFICATIONS.

49. The changes belonging to the second group are those which take place in words expressing those general ideas and feelings which are common to every nation and every period. It would be interesting to study the expression of a certain number of these ideas or of these feelings in a natural group of languages. Thus, the way in which are rendered the ideas to think, to will, to desire; love, hatred, pride, anger, avarice, idleness, etc.; the names of relatives, of the family; the names of familiar animals; common objects in constant use; in a word, everything which has to do with the life of the people. And here we should have to examine what are the causes which, in the denomination of objects, bring about the consideration of such and such a particular quality, and therefore the adoption of one determinant rather than of another. We shall give a few examples to indicate the various aspects of this research.

50. I. When we compare the preposition 'à' with its English equivalent preposition 'to', we are struck with the relative precision maintained by the latter in the expression of the relations which it denotes. The idea of progress from one point towards another in space and time, and in the relations described, remains always visible and always felt in the English It may be represented figuratively by a straight The French preposition is very different. the primitive idea of the Latin ad is kept in aller à Paris, to go to Paris, what becomes of it in être à Paris, to be at Paris; travailler à la lumière d'une lampe, to work by the light of a lamp; courir à toute force, to run at full speed; travailler à la machine, to work with a machine; se battre à l'epée, to fight with swords, etc. The French mind, more mobile than the Saxon mind, allows itself to be drawn aside by the most delicate relations, and complacently follows the turns of a subtle analysis.

51. II. It would seem characteristic of the Indo-European mind, or at least of the Aryan family in Europe, to start from the idea of two, and, by a natural and unconscious process, to arrive at the idea of badness.

The Indo-European root dva (Lat. duo, Eng. two) gives in Greek not only the numerical  $\delta \dot{\nu} \omega$ , but also the particle  $\delta \dot{\nu} s$ , which has a bad signification, and expresses the idea of difficulty, pain, unpleasantness ( $\delta vs - \mu a \theta \dot{\gamma} s$ , who learns with difficulty;  $\delta vs - \pi vota$ , dyspnæa, difficulty of respiration;  $\delta vs - \epsilon \lambda \pi \dot{\nu} s$ , desperate).

From the radical  $\delta v$ -, found in  $\delta v$ s, is also derived the root  $\delta F_{is}$ , which has given the Gr.  $\delta i$ s, and the O.L. dvis.

The Gr. δίς has preserved intact the meaning of twice, but we see already in its derivative δίχα the bad sense appear, as in διχονοῦς, perfidious; διχοστασία, discord.

The early Lat. dvis gives rise in turns to dis and bis. Dis has sometimes, though not always, a bad sense (dif-ficilis, difficult; dis-plicere, displease), which it has kept exclusively in the Romance languages (Ital. dis-, F. dés-, etc.). Bis has in Latin only the meaning twice, but in the Romance (under the form bis, bes) it takes a bad sense (O.F. bes-torné = badly turned; O.F. bes-vue, mod. bévue, = erroneous view, mistake).

The Germ. zwei, the L.G. twei, the Eng. two, which are derivatives from the root dva, form part of locations or compound words in which the bad sense is evident (entzweireissen, to tear in pieces, lit. to tear in two; mein Schues sint twei, My shoes are torn, lit. are two).\*

It is perfectly natural to express by the word meaning two the idea of division, separation, disintegration. But two might also be used to express the idea of to double, to increase, to develop; as, for instance, in the multiplication of animals or plants. The idea of two in itself conveys neither the idea of progress nor of destruction, but it is the latter idea which our Aryan languages seem to prefer to assign to the root dva.

The Gr. ἄλλωs, the Lat. aliter, otherwise, sometimes come to have a bad sense, which the Lat. secus (really

<sup>\*</sup> Vide Max Müller, "Lectures on the Science of Language," 1880, vol. ii. p. 243.

"otherwise") generally possesses. Alter, second, other, has completely undergone a similar modification in its derivatives alterare (F. altérer), to change for the worse, adulterare, to corrupt. Now, the Eng. alteration is perfectly neutral. On the other hand, the F. autrement, in familiar conversation, comes to have the sense of change for the better. Ce tableau-ci est autrement peint que celui-là, means, This picture is otherwise, and very much better, painted than that. Thus the idea of other does not imply that of other than it should be; it may express the idea of better just as well as that of worse.

The Germ. miss signified in O.H.G. varied, divers; in modern German it has come to mean bad. The F. duplicité is synonymous with treachery.

In nearly all these cases we see the mind fix its attention just on those things in which diversity is a defect rather than those in which it is an advantage; and so the idea of diversity tends to that of perversity.

52. III. If we compare metaphor in the Indo-European languages and in the Semitic languages, we shall perceive that in the first family it is apt to identify itself with the second term, and, by forgetfulness of the first term of the comparison, becomes its equivalent, while in the latter case it keeps almost everywhere and always its transparency.

The abstract idea in Hebrew cannot free itself from the material image. That is why the language of the Bible, so picturesque and so poetical, is all the more powerless to express a simple idea in its bare

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and abstract form. In one case the mind in its greater tenacity keeps faithfully, as in a changeless mirror, the image and the imprint of the material sensation. In another the more supple thought is easily freed from the material impression, and without an effort is elevated to the conception of the idea.

53. Without losing ourselves in these too vast questions, we shall keep within the limits of French, which in itself offers us an immense field for observation. In the changes which we will now consider, we may start from two converse points of view; either, first, the things which are to be designated (the choice of a determinant), or, the terms which designate them.

54. I. It is, for example, interesting to see how the people arrive at the designation of common objects.

The following are names of utensils of which the determinants are borrowed from metaphors referring to the animal kingdom: corbeau, a crow, a bracket; grue, a crane; chèvre, a she-goat, sheers; chevalet, diminutive of cheval, horse, an easel; poutre (O.F., a mare), a beam; bourdon (from Lat. burdus, a mule), a great bell; robinet, a young sheep, a tap; chenet, a little dog, fire-dogs. So with instruments of war: bélier, a ram; mouton, a sheep, a pile-driver; chat, a cat, an engine of war in the Middle Ages; truie, a sow, an engine to throw heavy stones, a small cannon; émérillon, a merlin, a long cannon; mousquet, a sparrowhawk, a musket; sacre, a large falcon, a large cannon;

coulewre and coulewrine, a serpent, a culverin. It is curious to see animals receive, by a humorous change of application, the names of men. Sansonnet, a starling, from Samson; jacquot, a parrot; pierrot, a sparrow; margot (familiar name for Marguerite), a magpie; martinet, a martin, etc.; martin, a bear; fouquet, a squirrel; marcou (from Marculph), raou (from Radulph), matou (from Matthaeus?), a male cat, etc. In the same way the populace takes the names of men or women especially to designate simpletons, as Jean, Jeannin, or Janin, Jeannot, Pierrot, Claude, Nicaise, Colas, Benêt; or of women of no esteem or somewhat ugly: Perronnelle, Fanchon, Marion, etc.

55. We may lay down as a general rule that different games are designated by the special name of the principal piece, or of the decisive move or play which characterizes them. Thus the game of dames, draughts, lit. ladies (from the piece called dame = a king); échecs, chess (from faire échec, to give check); dominos, dominos (from a play called faire domino); piquet, a game of cards (from certain play, faire pic, repic); impériale, at first a certain hand in the game; la triomphe, the turn-up or triumph, trump card; le reversis, the number of tricks gained in the game; la mouche, a flush; all these names, originally applied to special features of games of cards, have been applied to denote games as a whole.

56. II. From the opposite point of view we may cast

a glance at the different occupations of a people, and see the metaphors which they contribute to the common speech: war, politics, law, the arts and manufactures, hunting, fishing, the navy, games (in France, especially the game of tennis), agriculture, etc. Here, for example, is a group of metaphors with which hunting has enriched the French language:—

Acharner: Lancer le faucon sur la chair, To flesh the falcon; figuratively, Acharner quelqu'un sur un ennemi, To spur a man on against his enemy, cf. To hound one on.

Affût: Être à l'affût, properly, To be in a wood lying in wait for game; understood figuratively, Être à l'affût d'une bonne affaire, To look for the favourable moment.

Amorce: Ce que mord l'animal en s'y laissant prendre, The bait which the animal bites when it is caught; figuratively, the enticement of pleasure.

Appât, bait (the same radical as in pâture, pasture), that which is offered to a fish to lead him on; figuratively, that which excites desire.

Battue: Faire une battue (from battre), To beat the bush to make the game rise; figuratively, Les éclaireurs ont fait une battue, The scouts have reconnoitred.

Bec jaune, or béjaune, a young bird whose beak is still yellow; figuratively, a young man without experience, a fool.

Brisées, branches bruised or broken by the hunter in order that he may recognize where the game has passed; figuratively, Aller sur les brisées de quelqu'un, To walk in any one's footsteps; to steal another person's ideas.

Curée, the part of the hunted animal which was given to the dogs. The Old French was the word cuirée. The word came from cuir, skin, because the entrails thrown to the dogs were wrapped in the skin of the animal; figuratively, La curée des places, The strife for office.

Dresser: Dresser un chien, To train a dog, extended figuratively to: Dresser un domestique, To train a servant.

Filet, a small net to take game. Prendre le gibier dans ses filets, To take game in a snare; figuratively, Faire tomber quelqu'un dans ses filets, To ensnare.

Gibier, game; figuratively, Un gibier de potence, Game for the gallows.

Gorge: Rendre gorge, faire rendre gorge au faucon, To make the falcon throw up what it has swallowed. Figuratively, Faire rendre gorge aux traitants, To make the tax-farmers give up the sums of which they have taken fraudulent possession.

Gorge chaude, the curée swallowed still warm by the falcon; figuratively, Se faire des gorges chaudes de quelque chose, To be in great glee about anything.

Hâgard, a haggard, a falcon who still lives in the haies (hedges), who is not yet tamed; figuratively, a haggard aspect is one which resembles that of the wild falcon.

Leurre, a trap to catch a falcon; faucon deleurré ou déluré, which does not allow itself to be taken in a lure; figuratively, C'est une personne bien délurée, One who is not easily caught.

Limier (in O.F. liemier, from liem or lien), a dog held by a leash. The limiers are the coupled hounds, bloodhounds, which the huntsman holds in a leash before allowing them to hunt; figuratively, Les limiers de la police, The bloodhounds of the police.

Niais, a bird which is still in the nest, nid; figuratively, une personne niaise, a simpleton.

Parquer: Bestiaux parqués, Animals shut up in a park; figuratively, Voyageurs parqués dans une salle d'attente, Travellers shut up in a waiting-room.

Ramage, the song of birds perched sur la ramée, on the bough; figuratively, Le ramage d'un petit enfant, The prattle of a little child.

Serres, the talons of a bird of prey; figuratively, Tenir quelqu'un dans ses serres, To hold one in his clutches.

Siller le faucon, to seel a falcon, i.e. to sew up its eyelids (cils), to hinder its seeing and so to tame it; hence, déciller, déssiller le faucon, is to unseel it, give it back its sight when tamed; figuratively, déssiller les yeux à quelqu'un, is to make him see or comprehend all at once things to which he was previously blind.

Vol, flight: Un oiseau de haut vol, de bas vol, A bird of high flight or low flight; figuratively, C'est un oiseau de haut vol, A man of lofty aspirations.\*

• From the practical point of view of the language a very profitable and singularly fruitful exercise is to follow out the metaphors presented by different trades or occupations, which have come into ordinary use. I cannot too strongly advise teachers to extract from technical directories a selection of special terms, making their pupils seek out the ordinary metaphors, for the most part no longer understood, which these terms have given to the language.

57. Metaphors like the following will suffice to show that the Romans were originally an agricultural people.

Bos Lucanus, an ox of Lucania = an elephant.

Callere, to have callosities on the hand = to be clever. Cornu, a horn = the wing of an army.

Cohors, the enclosure of a farm = a division of a legion.

Manipulus, a blade of grass = a division of a cohort.

Emolumentum, payment of the miller's money = profit, gain.

Salarium, quantity of salt given in payment = workmen's salary.

Musculus, a little mouse = muscle.

Lacertus, a lizard = the arm.

Lætus, fat, fertile = prosperous.

Lira, a furrow; delirare, to go out of the furrow = out of the way; so, délirer, to be mad.

Rivus, a river, whence (1) rivalis, one who lives on a river, and, from the quarrels between the proprietors of the river banks, so = any competitor, rival; (2) derivare, dériver, to tap a watercourse for the irrigation of a field, and figuratively, to derive one thing from another.

58. III. A curious fact of popular language is the deformation which it deliberately inflicts on the foreign words which it accepts. It is astonishing to see words of learned origin, which have their full and entire value in scientific language, descend in popular use to ridiculous and degrading functions. Le philo-

sophe, philosopher, comes to mean one who cheats at a game; espèce, species, individu, individual, become gross insults; quolibet, from the scholastic Lat. quodlibet, (a kind of logical proposition) comes to mean a witless joke; cancan, a piece of gossip, began by being an official discourse in Latin; élucubration, the working-out of a subject, is now a ridiculous literary work; and, strangely enough, while péroraison, a peroration, and épilogue, are still terms of repute in rhetoric, pérorer has become to speechify, and épiloguer, to carp (at). Formerly it was the theologian who sophistiquait, i.e. raised subtle arguments; now it is the unscrupulous retail dealer who sophistique, or adulterates, Imbécile was a fine word in the poetry his goods. of the seventeenth century; les mains imbéciles were feeble hands: the eighteenth century made imbécile mean a man weak and powerless in mind, and it is now one of the most injurious terms used in popular language. Astrology introduced a series of terms: martial, jovial, saturnien, etc., born under the planet Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, etc. Saturnien, saturnine, has disappeared; martial still preserves a well-to-do air under its energetic form; but jovial, for one whom Jove has favoured with good bodily and mental health, with the most happy temperament, is applied to a man whose gaiety is unrefined, and whose humour is gross. A coarse irony \* seems to take pleasure in degrading these words

<sup>\*</sup> The part which irony plays in language has yet to be studied. Irony arrives at results analogous to those indicated by the celebrated etymology, *lucus a non lucendo*.

ill understood, and in avenging popular ignorance on the language of educated men. It is true that by a more generous, and at the same time more general sentiment, popular language, under a better inspiration, often seeks to lay hold of these learned words and appropriate them, thinking thus to gain nobleness and elegance; but, on the other hand, it loses many words of a good stamp.

It is also perhaps irony or some similar feeling which corrupts words borrowed from neighbouring peoples. This fact has long been remarked, and it will be enough to quote a few examples. Compare with their primitive meanings those which the French language now gives to—

Rosse (O.H.G. hros, a horse), a broken-down horse.

Lippe (Germ. lippe, a lip), a hanging or swollen lip.

Lande (Germ. land), waste land.

Reitre (Germ. reiter, a gallant soldier), a brutal soldier.

Bouquin (Flem. bookein, a little book), a worthless book.

Håbleur (Sp. hablador, a talker), a boastful talker.

Matamore (Sp. matamoro, a slayer of Moors), a braggart.

Capitan (Sp. capitan, captain), swaggerer.

Donzelle (Ital. donzella, a young lady), a wench.

59. IV. We may briefly point out, as a fruitful matter of study for popular psychology and specially for comparative popular psychology, idioms and meta-

phorical phrases. The play upon words so common among the people allows their turn of mind to be clearly seen, their ingenuity, their delicacy, and their grossness.

Coucher à la belle étoile, To lie under the stars = To be homeless.

Vouloir prendre la lune avec les, dents, To wish to catch the moon with the teeth = To wish for the impossible; cf. To cry for the moon.

Renvoyer de Caïphe à Pilate, To send from Caiaphas to Pilate = To send from pillar to post.

Tourner autour du pot, To go round the pot = To beat about the bush.

Amuser le tapis, To amuse the carpet = To entertain a company by one's conversation.

Avoir barre sur quelqu'un, in the game of prisoner's base, to have the right to pursue any one = to have the advantage over.

Donner un coup de langue à quelqu'un, To give one a stroke with the tongue = To speak ill of any one.

Faire tirer lea marrons du feu, To make any one pull the chestnuts out of the fire = cat's paw.

Tirer les vers du nez, To pull the worms from the nose = To pump any one.

Faire patte de velours, To make a velvet paw like a cat = To be all smirks and smiles.

Graisser la patte, To grease the palm = To tip any one.

Faire la pluie et le beau temps, To make fair weather and foul = To rule the roast.

Tirer de l'huile d'un mur, To draw oil from a wall = To draw blood from a stone.

Manger son blé en herbe, To eat the corn when green = To throw away one's money.

 $\hat{E}$ tre sur les dents, To be upon the teeth; said of a horse when he leans on the bit = To be overwhelmed with fatigue.

Être une poule mouillée, To be (like) a draggled hen = To be a milksop.

Ne battre que d'une aile, To fly with one wing; cf. "My life has crept so long on a broken wing" (Tennyson).

Donner de l'encensoir par le nez, To put the censer under the nose = To flatter outrageously.

Ne pas voir plus loin que son nez, Not to see beyond one's nose.

Jeter sa langue aux chiens, To throw one's tongue to the dogs = To give up guessing.

 $\hat{E}$ tre deux têtes sous un bonnet, To be two heads under one cap = To be always of the same opinion.

Mener tambour battant, To lead by beat of the drum = To command despotically.

Mettre la puce à l'oreille, To put a flea in the ear.

Avoir la tête près du bonnet, To have one's head close to the cap = To be quick-tempered.

Prendre ses jambes à son cou, To take one's legs on one's neck = To run away at full speed.

Faire le diable à quatre, To be four people playing the devil = To make a great noise.

Grossier comme un pain d'orge, As coarse as a loaf of barley-bread = Very coarse.

Il a l'esprit aigu comme une boule, His mind is as sharp as a ball = He is a blockhead.

Bête comme un chou, As stupid as a cabbage = Very stupid.

Il a bon cœur, il ne rend rien, He has a good stomach \* and brings up nothing = He does not restore willingly.

Mauvais archer, il tire mal, He is a bad archer, he draws (his bow) badly = Draws money from his purse with difficulty.

Il eût été bon chantre, il entonne bien, He would have been a good chorister, he sings well (or, he drinks hard).

60. V. Although popular thought loves sensuous images, it has not always clear and precise ideas; it confounds things which differ with each other, and allows itself to be drawn aside by vague and inexact coincidences.

Thus the English expressions, grandfather and grandmother involve the incorrect grandchild, granddaughter.
The French bru, daughter-in-law, is the German braut,
a bride. The Latin avunculus and nepos, grandfather
and grandson, give the French oncle and neveu, the
brother of father or mother, or son of brother or sister.
The French expressions, beau-père, belle-mère, beau-frère,
belle-sœur, etc., are vague terms, expressing no definite
relationship. The adjective, sans pareil, Chose sans
pareille, a thing without its like, has created the unintelligible expression, non pareil; Une beauté non

 A play on the word cœur, stomach and heart: also = He is good-hearted (ironically). pareille, a beauty not like = an incomparable beauty. All the French and Romance dialects continually confound the notion of louche and borgne, squint-eyed and one-eyed. The names of colours are vague, they easily pass from one colour to another. Nothing is more obscure than the history of the words, gris, bleu, blond, O.F. bloi, grey, blue, light brown, which appear to have been confounded and to have designated quite different colours in the early part of the Middle Ages. singular that the Greeks should have had no word to designate blue, which their language confounded with green. Γλαυχὸν designated both green and blue. may have arisen from confusion and indistinctness in language only, while the thought remained clear, or it may be that modern peoples, by a new and more profound analysis, have acquired the idea of shades and sensations unknown to the ancients.

61. These few observations suffice to show the almost indefinite extent of researches such as these. The first necessity would be the compilation of an etymological and historical dictionary of the meanings of a language. This work once done for several languages of the same family, we could investigate with advantage either the identity of metaphors or the comparison of the different ways of expressing the same ideas and the same facts. If an ordinary dictionary presents the state of a language at a given moment, and consequently the whole of the ideas expressed by that language, an historical dictionary presents in the succession of their development the series

of ideas which have been attached to words, and with it a part of the general psychology of the people speaking that language. The utility of these studies in the philosophy of language is to bring new elements into the science of the unconscious. Philosophic researches up to this time have hardly ever been carried beyond the individual, and in general philosophers have made experiments upon themselves, that is to say, on select and rarer natures. But philosophy should also study the mass in the blind and unconscious evolution of their instincts. Of the different natural manifestations, wherein the character of a people reflects itself, their religion, literature, art, and institutions, language is the most direct and most immediate, because it does not in the same degree as the others submit to the powerful and personal action of individual men of genius, and because, on the other hand, it is the very expression of the people's turn of mind, it is the very mould of their thought. The historical dictionary of a language is a series of tombs in which sleep, with past generations of men, the generations of thought which their language expressed, and the audible forms in which these thoughts embodied themselves.

### CHAPTER IV.

#### PHILOLOGICAL CONDITIONS.

62. We have now studied the logical and psychological changes in meaning, and have to consider under what conditions these are brought about in the heart of the language, how they penetrate it and make a home for themselves in it. Here the question becomes more extended, for it embraces both the neologisms of meaning and the neologisms of words, which we noted at the beginning of this inquiry, only to put them aside for a time. Let us see what passes under our eyes. Some one in conversation invents, or a writer risks, a new expression, word, or metaphor. It pleases those who have heard or read it, and spreads little by little, becomes the fashion, and succeeds. If it corresponds with any durable idea or feeling, it has a good chance of maintaining itself in the language.

Now the centres of formation are innumerable. Fashionable society, the political world, the army, the workshop, country life, as many as are the natural groups of people and their occupations, so many are the different centres of neologisms. Some, the fancies of a moment, appear only like those ephemeral flowers

which open for a day at the foot of hardy plants, shrubs, or ancient trees. Others maintain their hold for a longer or shorter time in the place where they were born, live even for long years, or centuries, in that narrow world without ever leaving it; others break their bounds, win their way into more extended circles, and sometimes, aided by circumstance, gain the rights of citizenship in the common language and add their wealth to its treasure. Among these we must note the neologisms which answer to a general want, which are created on many sides at once, and spring in full panoply from a thousand brains. have the better luck; as a rule, in proportion as these expressions are limited to a restricted circle, the smaller is their chance of survival. A neologism is a plant which in order to live must needs thrust its roots into the greatest possible number of minds.

Once adopted by general usage, neologisms obtain civil rights, metaphors become consecrated, and can be no longer changed.

63. What, then, should be our conduct in regard to neologisms? Should we accept them or set them aside with indifference? If there be a choice, what is our standard? May the writer employ them without injustice to the language?

The neologism of the writer is a literary and conscious creation directed to an artistic end, and is subject to the laws of criticism. He who attempts it must be able to justify the liberty he has taken with the

language. To put it in another way, the word must be necessary under the given circumstances, and must be the clearest or strongest expression of the idea which has to be represented. Under these conditions it may be pardoned or rather it will deserve to last, and will last. It is by such boldness that great writers have enriched their language.

Now and then literary neologism is brought about by the completeness of a phrase and the concatenation of ideas, and becomes indispensable.

M. Villemain, in the preface to the "Dictionnaire de l'Académie," edit. 1835, speaking of languages which are formed and transformed, and finally perish according to the laws which govern the life of human affairs, used the following phrase: "Dans une contrée de l'immobile Orient où nulle invasion n'a pénétré, où nulle barbarie n'a prévalu, une langue parvenue à sa perfection s'est déconstruite et altrée d'elle é-même par la seule loi du changement naturelle à l'esprit humain." "In a country of the unchanging East, into which no invasion has penetrated, where no barbarism has prevailed, a language which had attained its perfection has of itself been 'deconstructed' and altered by the law of change natural to the human mind." The verb déconstruire, to "deconstruct," is not found in the "Dictionnaire de l'Académie," it has not been admitted by usage, there being no permanent necessity felt for it, and yet it is so well brought into this connection by the train of ideas that we find it perfectly natural; it is the only right term, and any periphrases would be

faulty. It is one of those ephemeral words which take their rise from the momentary need for them, and die as soon as that need ceases. They are not still-born, they have lived for a moment, and might live anew with the circumstance which created them.

64. If the literary neologism is subject to criticism, and must account to it for its creation, popular neologism is independent, and must be explained by science. The ancients recognized this long ago. The people is sovereign in regard to language. "Populus in sua potestate, singuli in illius," said Varro; and Plato before him wrote: "In the matter of language, the people is an excellent master." Voltaire affirms this while he regrets it: "Il est triste qu'en fait de langue, comme en d'autres usages plus important, ce soit la populace qui dirige les premiers d'une nation." "It is a sad fact that in language, as in other more important customs, the populace really leads the chiefs of a nation."

Universal suffrage has not always existed in politics; it has always existed in the domain of language. There the people is all powerful, and it is infallible because its errors sooner or later make the law. Language, in fact, is a natural creation, and not an edifice regularly planned and built up. In order to communicate their ideas to each other, men instinctively have recourse to a collection and system of natural signs which are incessantly modified in time and space under the action of physiological and psychological laws; but as soon as the greater part of men understand each other

by its aid, the system has rendered all the services that we have a right to ask of it. This is why even logical errors and anomalies cease to be such the moment they are generally accepted, and become legitimate representations of thought. Such is the foundation of the principle that the force of usage alone is the rule of language,

" Quem penes arbitrium est et jus et norma loquendi."

But this usage incessantly varies: Consuctudo loquendi in motu est (Varro); thus the French language, from its beginning, has obeyed certain tendencies which have transformed its phonetics, its grammatical forms, its syntax, its vocabulary: its phonetics under the permanent influence which the need of a more rapid pronunciation has exercised on it; its grammatical forms and its syntax under the action of an analytical spirit which has slowly disorganized its old half synthetic construction inherited from the Latin in order to substitute for it a more logical and rational construction; its vocabulary under the influence of that changeable and active life of the mind incessantly acquiring new ideas, learning new facts, seeing and perceiving things under new aspects. But, like everything which has life, language is subject to two contrary forces, one originative, the other conservative. The true progress of language consists in gradually yielding to the first, and allowing itself to be held back by the second, or else the transformation would be too rapid, and languages would no longer preserve their unity.\* We may note this in

<sup>\*</sup> See Introduction, pp. 6, 7.

### PHILOLOGICAL CONDITIONS.

the passage of popular Latin into the Romance languages. Under the incursions of the barbarian, civilization and tradition wholly disappeared, the conservative forces of language as well as others, and the popular idiom, being thus unchecked, changed with such rapidity that in the space of three or four centuries it resulted in wholly new tongues. Now, so rapid a transformation is anarchy; since a language cannot be fixed, it ought to change as slowly as possible. The literary language has to play a conservative part. It must oppose popular neologisms, and accept them only when they become uni-The expression formerly in use was versally spread. Il me souvient, It comes back to me = I remember. The people said, Je me souviens, I come back to myself, and the literary language adopted the phrase. our days the literary language se rappelle le passé, calls back to itself the past; popular language se rappelle du passé. Literary language should not imitate this till the time when some member of the Academy shall say, in familiar conversation, Je m'en rappelle.

65. In our day, and in our language, when the nineteenth century is drawing to a close, it is to be feared that of these two forces, that of tradition is yielding to the revolutionary force which is drawing the French language in directions as yet unknown.) We are the spectators of an unbridled triumph of neologism which is not content with taking its place in our language, but violently displaces a number of words with a good French stamp on them and deserving of preservation.

At least, if we are compelled to employ new terms, we may also endeavour to revive old words totally vanished or preserved only in some provincial dialects—words which, related to others in ordinary use, are explained by them and sometimes re-establish the mutual analogies and traces of relationship among them. Space will not allow us to develop this point, which would carry us beyond our limits, and we can only point out the fact and pass on.

# SECOND PART.

THE SOCIETY OF WORDS.

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## SECOND PART.

## THE SOCIETY OF WORDS.

66. Words live no isolated life in our thought and on our lips. They are in reciprocal intercourse each with the others, because, being representatives of our ideas, they reproduce in the combination of the sentence the movement of thought with all the complex series of intellectual facts which constitutes it.

Considered from this new point of view the study of words raises various questions.

Words finding themselves in reciprocal contact within the unity of the sentence are subject to various reciprocal actions.

### CHAPTER I.

#### CONTAGION.

67. When grammatical usage has united in fixed expressions terms which we are thenceforward accustomed to see together, there are frequently produced what we may call facts of contagion.\* Thus, pas, point, and words such as aucun, personne, rien, guère, have passed from a positive to a negative signification under the influence of the negation ne, which generally accompanies them. Old French used to say, La rien que j'aime guère, i.e. La chose que j'aime beaucoup, The thing which I like much. At present we only see in guère a synonym of pas beaucoup, and in rien, rem, the equivalent of the Latin nihil, nothing.

Mais originally signified de plus, more; cependant, originally signified pendant ce temps, during this time. They have passed into the adversative sense which they possess at present solely because in a number of expres-

\* V. Michel Bréal, Les lois intellectuelles du langage, fragment de Sémantique, in the Annuaire de l'association pour l'encouragement des études grecques en France, 1883, p. 132 and following.

sions the adversative idea understood arose from the entire phrase. In the same way we see avec, with, pass into the meaning of malgré, in spite of, in such a phrase as Avec tout son savoir il a échoué, In spite of all his cleverness he failed. The complete idea would be Il a échoué alors qu'avec tout son savoir, il aurait dû réussir, He failed when, with all his cleverness, he should have succeeded.

Pour came to have a similar meaning. Old French said, Il se promène pour le plaisir qu'il y trouve, He takes a walk for pleasure, giving to pour the meaning "because of." Now let us follow the development of this preposition in the following phrases.

Se promener pour le plaisir qu'on y trouve, To take a walk for pleasure.

Je ne me promène pas pour le plaisir que j'y trouverais, I do not take a walk for the pleasure it may give me; that is to say, When I might do so, because of the pleasure I should take in it.

Pour le plaisir que je trouverais à la promenade je n'en reste pas moins à la maison, Though I take pleasure (lit. for the pleasure I take) in walking, I yet stay at home.

Pour agréable que soit la promenade je n'en reste pas moins à la maison, However pleasant walking may be, yet I stay at home.

Pour grands que soient les rois ils sont ce que nous sommes (Corneille), Great as kings are, they are like ourselves.

Ah! pour être dévôt on n'en est pas moins homme,

(Molière, Tartufe) Ah, I may be a saint, but I am not the less a man.

Here pour, from the meaning "because of," has come to have the meaning "in spite of."

68. Changes of this kind are the consequence of new arrangements and combinations of the members of a sentence, which cause it as a whole to convey an additional idea not explicitly expressed; this idea then becomes identified with some special word of the phrase, which is thus endowed with new functions.

It is in this way that the writer can exert a personal action upon words, and give them a whole host of new senses.

I can here only indicate this point, which of itself might be expanded into a treatise. We may see what Victor Hugo has done with the word fauve, reddish, fallow, what unexpected effects he has made it render, and this solely by the way in which he has woven it into the tissue of his sentence.

Derrière eux cheminait la mort, squelette chauve, Il semblait qu'aux naseaux de leur cavale fauve, On entendit la mer ou la forêt gronder. V. Hugo, Légende des Siècles, les Chevaliers Errants.

Here fauve is taken in its proper meaning: (animal) with a reddish fur.

On vante Eviradnus d'Altorf à Chaux-de-font. Quand il songe et s'accoude, on dirait Charlemagne. Ródant, tout hérissé, du bois à la montagne. Velu, fauve, il a l'air d'un loup qui serait bon. Id. ibid., Eviradnus, 3. Here fauve hesitates between its proper and figurative meanings, "with a reddish skin," or "rough" as the fauves, animals, which dwell in the forest.

In the following lines fauve takes a new and singular meaning—

Corbus triste agonise. Pourtant
L'hiver lui plait, l'hiver sauvage combattant.
Il se refait, avec les convulsions sombres
Des nuages hagards croulant sur les décombres,
Avec l'éclair qui frappe et fuit comme un larron,
Avec les souffles noirs qui sonnent du clairon,
Une sorte de vie effrayante à sa taille.
La tempête est la sœur fauve de la bataille.

Id. ibid.

And this is how Victor Hugo makes this word fauve give out all the majestic horror of mysterious forests.\*

\* To the frequent use of expressions grouped together, the languageowes the large number of composite words formed by juxtaposition (without ellipsis), such as the substantives—gendarme, man-at-arms = policeman; arc-en-ciel, arch in the sky = rainbow; pot-au-feu, pot on the fire = boiled beef; piedestal, foot of the support = pedestal; verjus, juice of the green grape = verjuice; saindous, soft grease = lard; coffre-fort, strong box, etc.: and the pronouns—celui-ci, this one here; lequel, the person who; quiconque, whoever, etc.: and the words—toujours, all the days = always; longtemps, long time = long; environ, in the neighbourhood = about; toutefots, every time = however; quelquefots, at whatever time = sometimes.

### CHAPTER II.

#### REACTION.

69. Even apart from sentences words may act upon each other in various ways. Thus words united by some relation of form or meaning, receive by ricochet, as it were, the meanings or uses which are the property of only one of them. Oriental pearls are celebrated for their beauty. Hence perle orientale, an oriental pearl, takes the sense of perle brillante = an orient pearl. Thus oriental having the sense brilliant, orient receives by a rebound an analogous sense, and we say l'orient d'une perle, to designate the iridescence of the pearl and its various and vivid reflections.

In the last century the adjective noble was applied to a bird of prey used in hunting, i.e., in the amusements of the nobility. Other birds of prey, by simple antethesis, came to be called ignobles.

Les Indes Occidentales, the West Indies, was the early name given to America, and this name once received, India gained by opposition the name Indes Orientales.

Bourgeois, a burgess, a middle-class citizen, will be

alternately a name of honour or of contempt, according to the intention of the speaker, who may contrast it either with the peasant or noble.

Bouquet is properly un petit bois, a little wood, a collection of trees. By extension, the word was applied to a collection of flowers, un bouquet de fleurs, a nosegay. The word bouquet, tending for some reason or other (perhaps the influence of the Italian boschetto, bosquet) to disappear in its original meaning, had to be reinforced by the addition of the words d'arbres: un bouquet d'arbres, when the primitive signification was intended.

Mouchoir, a kerchief, means properly the object with which we wipe the face (cf. the low words, "a wipe"). It takes the new sense of a light piece of stuff specially designed to be worn round the neck. Mouchoir having thus lost its etymological signification, the words de poche, pocket-(handkerchief), in opposition to the mouchoir de cou, is added to indicate the earlier meaning.

### CHAPTER III.

#### THE STRUGGLE FOR LIFE.

70. The preceding examples bring us naturally to the phenomena of the struggle for life, which we shall illustrate by the following new ones.

The idea of necessity is at present expressed by the verb falloir; Old French said in this sense estovoir and convenir. Estovoir was only employed in the sense of absolute necessity. Convenir expressed, at first, moral necessity, the only meaning which it has kept up till our time. It also expressed absolute necessity, a sense which it has now lost. Il lui convient mourir was said in Old French in speaking of a sick or wounded man. Falloir was an intransitive verb, which signified to be lacking or be wanting. We still say in this sense, Au bout de l'aune faut le drap, The cloth falls short of the yard measure. From the idea of lacking, we easily arrive at the notion of being needed. L'argent lui faut, i.e. He lacks money, comes to mean, He needs money. But this change of meaning was only brought

about at the end of the Middle Ages, when estovoir disappeared and convenir was reduced to the sense it now has, and expressed only moral obligation. Thus of these terms the one disappeared before the other, be it that the new-comer took the place of the others when they had disappeared, or be it that it drove them out.

Let us follow the parallel development of the prepositions en, dedans, and dans.

En, in the old language, expressed the greater part of those relations which it had inherited from the Latin in. By the side of en, dedans took its place, being, at the same time, not only a preposition but also an adverb, and as a preposition expressing en more forcibly. Now en, in combination with the articles le and les, gave the forms ou and es. En ciel became ou ciel; en les circonstances became es circonstances; but en was not contracted before the elided article or the feminine article: En l'état; en la circonstance. In the sixteenth century ou and es disappeared.\* In order to replace them the language in certain cases turned to au and aux, and that is why we now say en votre nom et au mien (formerly ou mien), in your name and in mine; se mettre au lit (formerly ou lit), to lie down on the bed; mettre aux fers (formerly es fers), to put in irons. But more generally the language had recourse to a preposition which up to that time had been little used, namely, dans; ou became dans le; es became dans

<sup>\*</sup> Es has been preserved only in the expressions, no longer generally understood, es lettres, es eciences, es arts, etc.

les. Hence came the habit of employing dans before finite nouns: dans le ciel, in heaven; dans les circonstances, under the circumstances: and by reaction en was reduced, as a rule, to stand only before nouns not preceded by an article. We now say en France, and dans le pays; être en grâce, en faveur; and être dans les bonnes grâces de quelqu'un.\*

On the other hand, dans taking a more and more marked development as a preposition, dedans became useless as such. The seventeenth century shows us the struggle between the two words. After 1650, we find dedans hardly ever used except as an adverb, and the neologism dans has completely triumphed.

71. It is in the learned formation of words that the struggle is especially apparent. It is easy to see the competition which arose between popular and foreign words. Take the Latin verbs nature and navigare. Nature became the O.F. nouer, to swim; navigare became the O.F. nagier, nager, to navigate. Nouer having disappeared, nager replaced it; and meant, at the same time, "to swim," the new sense, and "to navigate," the primitive one.

The learned formation then introduced the word navigare under its Latin form. We now say naviguer where nager was formerly used. The sense of navigare so completely died out of nager, that at the present day it has only the meaning of natare, to swim. We still say, it is true, with the meaning of navigare,

<sup>\*</sup> Vide p. 157, for another sense of en.

"les rameurs nagent;" but this is the only trace of the etymological meaning of nager. Thus nouer, when it disappeared, left its meaning to nager, which handed on its own proper meaning to naviguer.

## CHAPTER IV.

#### SYNONYMS.

72. The struggles of these allied words, contending for their signification, at once recalls to the mind a number of facts of much the same character, I mean the existence of synonyms. At first sight there is something paradoxical in the existence of words which have the same meaning, but a little reflection shows that in a well-constructed language there are no perfect synonyms. Every word in use has its proper function, and though they may be nearly allied, the functions of two synonyms are none the less different. No doubt, even in the French language, we meet with many different terms to designate the same object. plant, utensil, industrial product, has, it may be, five, six, or eight names, but these names all have their proper uses, which they find in different places or in different trades. Each group of men employs but one of these terms. The different names, moreover, indicate different characteristics, according to which the same objects have been originally named. It is true, again, that the way in which the literary language has flooded the popular language has brought us a number of doublets and a number of synonyms, and that, taken by themselves, these expressions for the most part designate exactly the same thing. But the very fact that one of the two series belongs to popular language, and the other to the learned didactic language, suffices to show the difference of shade, or at least of usage, between them.

As a matter of fact, there cannot be in ordinary language any enduring perfect synonyms, unless one of them be little used; for, if both are employed at a given moment, the perfect synonymy cannot last long; the mind will not load itself with a useless burden, and ends by either getting rid of or by making use of it.\*

- 73. We may divide synonyms into three classes, according to their origin.
- I. The same word takes two different forms by the accidents of etymological derivation.
- II. The same word is differentiated by special prefixes or suffixes, or by different syntactical uses.
- III: Words of different origin and different signification meet each other in the course of the language, and at a certain point of their development are applied to one and the same object.
- 74. I. The first class includes a considerable number of what are called doublets. Take for example the verb plier, to fold.
- \* Compare the theory of change of function in zoology, due to Dohrn.

## In Old French it was conjugated-

Pres. Indicative.	Pres. Subjunctive.
$m{Je}$ $m{plie}$	que je plie
Tu plies	que tu plies
Il~plie	qu'il plie
Nous ployons	que nous ployions
Vous ployez	que vous ployiez
$\Pi(s)$ plient	qu'il(s) $plient$

## Imperative.

Plie ployons ployez

In the rest of the conjugation the radical was ploy. In the same way—

prier was conjugated, Je prie, Nous proyons nier ,, ,, Je nie, Nous noyons noyer ,, ,, Je nie, Nous noyons.

At the end of the Middle Ages, the language found itself embarrassed with these double forms, and made out of them two series of verbs—plier and ployer; prier and proyer; nier and noyer (to deny); nier and noyer (to drown). Of these last three verbs the language has caused one of the two forms to disappear as useless—proyer, noyer (to deny), and nier (to drown); keeping prier, nier, and noyer. As the language kept the two forms of the first verb, it gave them different functions:—

Plier, to fold, to double an article by folding one of its surfaces against another.

Ployer, to bend an object which offers resistance. Other examples. The Lat. cathedra, became, according to regular phonetic laws, chaire. In the sixteenth century, Parisian pronunciation changed chaire into chaise; the two words, however, still continued to exist in the language, at first completely synonymous, afterwards differentiated. The etymological Latin meaning remains in chaire, a pulpit, and the popular form chaise received its popular meaning, a chair.

Col and cou are doublets of the same word, the Lat. collum, the neck. Instead of letting either of them disappear, as it has done with vou, a doublet of vol, flight, the language has utilized both of them, applying cou to the neck, and col, collar, to that part of the dress which surrounds the neck.

75. To group I. belong a number of doublets which the learned formation gives us side by side with words of popular formation. Examples:—

Sécurité, borrowed from securitatem, coexisting with sûreté
Fragile ,, fragilem ,, frêle
Rigide ,, rigidum ,, raide

Doublets such as these are often not synonymous, e.g. raison, reason; ration, ration; this is generally the case when one of them comes to us as a loan from a neighbouring foreign language.

Thus, châsse, a reliquary, and caisse, a box, from the Provençal caisso, from capsa.

Champ, a field, and camp, a camp, from the Ital. campo, from campum.

Table, a table, and tôle, sheet iron, from the Walloon taule, from tabula.

Dame, a lady, and duègne, a duenna, from the Sp. dueña, from domina.

In the former cases, the learned mode of formation and the popular mode of formation affecting the same Latin word set out from special and different significations. *Baison* reproduces the general sense of *rationem*, ration a special meaning. In the latter cases, when the doublet comes from a foreign language there is a chance that the Latin may have taken a peculiar meaning and a special use. And the word imported with its peculiar meaning has often hardly anything in common but its etymology with the native doublet.

There are, then, good reasons to explain why a large number of these doublets are not synonymous. They are so, however, in certain cases, and we have to discover how the common meaning is established.

Take raide, stiff, and rigide, rigid. To find their characteristic difference we must look for the first use of rigide. This is a word of learned formation, and was originally employed as a term of mechanics. This special use determined its figurative use. Rigide means that which has the look of a bar of iron: une corde métallique rigide. Raide means that which is tightly stretched: Danser sur la corde raide, To dance on the tight rope.

76. II. The radical is modified by different affixes and by different syntactical constructions, thus porter

to carry; apporter, to bring: prononcer, to pronounce; énoncer, to enunciate: courber, to bend; recourber, to bend back: serrer, to press; resserrer, to tighten: somme, a stretch of sleep; sommeil, sleep: règle, a rule; règlement, a regulation: bord, border; bordure, ornamental border: cœur, heart; courage, bravery: attaquer quelqu'un, to attack; s'attaquer à quelqu'un, to fasten on any one: apercevoir une chose, to perceive a thing; s'apercevoir d'une chose, to discern it: courir le cerf, to hunt the stag; courir à l'ennemi, to rush upon the foe: sortir d'un lieu, to go out of a place; sortir un objet, to take out a thing: monter l'escalier, to go upstairs; monter un cheval, to ride; monter un cavalier, to give a mount to a rider; monter un magasin, to set up a shop.

In the majority of cases the affix or the construction gives us the key to the synonymy.

Take prononcer and enoncer.

Pro means, in Latin, "before the public." Prononcer means, then, "to speak in a loud voice, clearly, so as to be easily heard."

E or ex indicating the way out of, énoncer will therefore mean to utter.

Take, again, porter and apporter.

We say Apportez-moi mon journal, Bring me my newspaper; but not Apportez lui mon journal, literally, Bring him my newspaper. Evidently, the difference of the synonyms comes from the preposition ad, which gives to apporter its peculiar value, as compared with porter. The value of the prefix ad is that expressed by

the verb venir, to come, as opposed to the verb aller, to go. Apporter is equivalent to venir porter. Cf. attirer, to draw = faire venir en tirant à soi; amener, to bring with one = faire venir en menant; abaisser (to put down) = faire venir en baissant.

Take, again, règle and règlement. Règle is the primitive term; Lat. regula. It is first employed in its proper sense, une règle de bois, a ruler, an instrument with which to trace a straight line. Hence the figurative meaning, that by which we direct our conduct. Règlement comes from régler, to rule, and is therefore that which helps us to rule, that by which we rule; it is the official expression of the rule.

77. To this series we may add, as examples of syntactic doublets, the expressions formed of a noun and an adjective, in which the adjective takes a different meaning according as it precedes or follows the noun:—

Bonhomme, a good fellow; homme bon a (morally) good man.

Brave homme, an honest man; homme brave, a brave man.

Certaines choses, some things; choses certaines, assured things.

Différentes personnes, various people; personnes différentes, people who are different.

Fausse note, a wrong note; note fausse, a note out of tune.

Grand homme, a great man; homme grand, a tall man.

Here the adjective, when it precedes immediately the noun, forms with it a sort of composite word, which eventually takes a special meaning. When, on the contrary, the adjective follows the noun, it reassumes the signification it has by itself; for, from the syntactic point of view, it is separated from the noun by a statement understood. Homme bon is equivalent to homme qui est bon. The separation which language makes between the substantive and the adjective placed after it, is made clear by the pronunciation, which allows a slur when the adjective precedes, and rejects it when the adjective follows.

Here is a curious instance.\* In the expression un savant aveugle, if savant is slurred with aveugle (savan-t-aveugle), it is an adjective; aveugle is the substantive, and the signification is "a learned blind man." But if we make a pause between the two words, aveugle will become the adjective, and savant the substantive: un savant aveugle, i.e. un savant qui est aveugle, a blind scholar.

78. In group II, we may also place the doublets which differ only by a slight change in their terminations:—

Cerveau cervelle
Escabeau escabelle
Cours course

In this case etymology gives us but little help. More

\* Vide H. Weil, "De l'ordre des mots dans les langues anciennes comparées aux langues modernes," Paris, 1870, p. 54.

usually, as in the first group, the habit of the language has given to each word its own value, and we must look to this habit carefully in order to understand the matter.

79. III. In the third group we find words to which the term "synonym" is generally applied. Words, differing in their etymology and originally in signification, happen in the course of their history to coalesce in one or more of their meanings.

At the point at which they so meet, they may be applied to the same object or the same idea; but they always present the object or the idea under a special aspect, and with a special shade of meaning which is due to the original signification. It is, then, in their etymology and in their original meanings that we must seek the key of the synonym of these words.

Such synonyms are: assurer, affirmer, certifier; courage, bravoure, valeur; orgueilleux, altier, hautain, superbe, insolent; adversité, malheur, infortune; bonheur, joie, plaisir; rester, demeurer, loger, etc.

Let us consider rester, demeurer, loger.

We may first remark that rester, in the expression Il reste telle rue (cf. Eng. "He is stopping at such a house"), is a popular neologism, to be avoided, and which is tending to replace demeurer. We may, then, put this expression aside, and examine loger and demeurer.

Loger, to lodge, comes from loge, a lodging; it means, therefore, occuper une loge, to occupy a lodging: Je

loge à l'hôtel, I lodge at the hotel. It simply implies the idea of a sheltered place which we occupy, without in any degree involving the idea of time or duration.

Demeurer. The primitive meaning is, to tarry on a journey; and, by extension, to take some time in doing anything: and it is this meaning which the word demeure still keeps in the expression, Il n'y a pas de péril en la demeure, There is no danger in waiting. Hence it signifies:

- (1) To remain or to stop for a certain time in a given place. The dominant idea here is that of duration of time, whence comes the figurative meaning, to be fixed in a certain state. Demeurer ferme dans le devoir, to stand firm to our duty.
- (2) To be established during a longer or shorter time in a place which we occupy. Demeurer dans une maison, to live in a house.

By this analysis then, we see exactly that the essential idea of *demeurer* is that of stability. For our present purpose the synonymy is explained.

Take, again, mener, conduire, and guider.

Conduire, to make another go with us, directing him to a distinct goal: thus, conduire un enfant à l'école, to take a child to school. The idea of direction is given by the etymology, ducere, to lead; dux, a leader.

Guider is to make one who is ignorant go with us. Guider carries with it an idea of ignorance. We take a "guide" when we do not know the way.

Mener, to take with us some one who allows himself to be taken; some one who yields or resigns himself. Thus, mener les bêtes aux champs, to lead the cows to pasture. This is the primitive sense, and the idea of unconscious movement, such as that of a herd of cattle, dominates all the figurative meanings. L'aveugle conduit le chien qui le mène, The blind man leads the dog who leads him.\* L'homme s'agite et Dieu le mène (Fénelon), Man resteth not, but God leads him.

80. It would be useless to pursue these examples of synonymy further. They will suffice to show the way we must follow in its investigation. Its study is in fact only a portion of the more general study which has for its object the precise determination of the meanings of words. Research of this kind, made from the historical point of view, brings us, as we have seen, much information as to the history of thought and civilization—while if pursued with reference to the practical knowledge of the language of our own time, it will teach us the proper value and exact meaning of words, and explain to us their figurative use.

Take the word carrière.

Littré defines it, (1) Lieu fermé de barrière et disposé pour les courses, A place enclosed by barriers, and arranged for racing.

- (2) Terme de manège, A horse-breaker's word. Course que peut faire un cheval sans perdre haleine, As far as a horse can run without losing breath. Ce cheval a bien fourni sa carrière.
- \* It is impossible to render in English the distinction between conduire and mener.

- (3) By extension, Une course quelconque, Any course.
- (4) Course or cours des astres, The course of the stars.
- (5) Champ, espace où la vie se déploie et s'exerce, où les choses s'accomplissent, où les sentiments se font jour, The field or space upon which life displays and exercises itself, on which things come to pass or opinions manifest themselves.
- (6) Le cours de la vie; le temps pendant lequel on exerce une charge, un emploi, etc., The course of life; the time during which we exercise given functions, occupy a position, etc.
  - (7) Profession, état, state; étude, study.

The inaccuracy of the first definition of the word has led the author into assigning to it a multiplicity of meanings, some of which it does not even possess, and between which there is no evident connection.

What, then, is the true definition of carrière?

The original meaning is, espace que le cheval a à parcourir dans un champs de courses, the distance which a horse has to travel on a race-course; and this meaning, of an interval to be traversed has given rise to and is evident in the only two derived significations.

First, espace que les astres ont à parcourir, the space which the stars have to traverse; e.g. Le soleil a parcouru la moitié de sa carrière, The sun has covered half his course.

Second, profession qui présente des degrés à parcourir, a profession with stages to be traversed.\*

\* Carrière, in French, is only applied to professions, such as the army or navy, in which there is regular promotion; but we do

The other meanings are only applications of the general meaning in particular cases. When once we have seized the primary meaning, we see how surely all its figurative uses, even those most specialized, are developed from it.

The numerous examples of this kind which present themselves to us force us to admire that unconscious logic which directs language in its extension and in its development. We should seek to develop the instinct which tells us that such or such a use is right and in conformity with the genius of the language, and to increase its sureness by reading good writers, by associating with careful speakers, and, above all, by personal reflection and observation.

not say, La carrière d'un artiste, d'un avocat. This word, in its conversion into the Eng. "career," has had its meaning widened, because its primary signification was not felt.

# THIRD PART.

HOW WORDS DIE.

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### THIRD PART.

## HOW WORDS DIE.

81. The disappearance of words is called, in the study of language, <u>desuetude</u>, or <u>disuse</u>. How, and through what causes, does this disuse come about?

We laid down two important series of facts in the chapters on the birth of words and new meanings.

- / I. Language creates new words or meanings to designate new facts, objects, or ideas.
- II. It gives to existing words new meanings in order to replace other words which have ceased to express a given idea.

So, when words disappear, we must distinguish between words which are forgotten because they designate things which are disappearing, and words which give place to others while expressing permanent ideas. In the first case, there is the loss of a fact and the loss of a word; and in the second, there is only a change in the expression of a fact which remains.

## CHAPTER I.

### NAMES OF DISUSED OBJECTS.

82. Words which fall out of use with the things which they designate, may be said to perish from historic causes. Thus a whole part of the terminology of the Middle Ages has disappeared because it represents objects, arms, instruments, money, vestments, institutions, social facts, ideas, etc., which disappeared with those times.

Weapons: algier, a kind of javelin; brogne, a kind of cuirass; buisine, a kind of trumpet; chaable, a kind of machine for throwing stones in war; espiel, a kind of lance; giesart, a kind of arrow; museras, a kind of dart; osberc, a kind of hauberk; safre, brass wires passed through the meshes of the hauberk; wigre, a kind of javelin.

Stuffs: ciclaton, paille, kinds of silken stuffs.

Coins: mangon, besant, abengue, angevin, etc.

Such words can only live again by the help of historic research. Erudition, by searching into ancient documents and bringing them to light, causes these words which denote vanished objects to reappear with the

vanished life. They are collected in special dictionaries, and reading and the development of historical studies revive them among a narrow circle of learned and literary men. Resuscitated by science, they live again with an artificial life.

Consequently there are many names of things which must have disappeared beyond recall, if they had not been preserved in written documents. In the discoveries due to archæological research there is a large number of objects to which we are obliged to give new names in our absolute ignorance of the old names which denoted them.

Another consequence is, that we find in documents a number of words, denoting objects, of which we cannot comprehend the meanings. Names, as we know, do not define things, they only point them out. Thus we may know that such a word means a weapon, but not what kind of weapon. Hence the obscurity which attaches to certain documents concerned with the Middle Ages.

## CHAPTER II.

### GENERAL TERMS.

83. We have now to ask how words disappear though expressing general ideas, which the language cannot lose. Little by little we cease to attach to them such and such a signification, and the loss of the meaning brings with it the loss of a word. The word has no reason for existence except in so far as it speaks to thought, and when it no longer says anything, language drops it as a useless incumbrance, as an empty or broken utensil which is thrown on the dust-heap. First comes decay, and then death.

Let us make the matter plain, by examples.

84. In the healthy state, a word develops its signification without losing anything of its original value.

Arbre, tree, by the side of its primitive meaning, which it retains completely, takes new meanings: as arbre de couche, shaft; arbre généalogique, genealogical tree; etc.

Corps, body, in the same way became corps de garde, guard; corps d'armée; corps de pompe, the barrel of a pump; corps de jupe, skirt; corps de bâtiment, a detached set of buildings, etc.

Embrasser, to embrace, means not only tenir, serrer dans ses bras, to hold or press in the arms, but also baiser, to kiss.

Éclat meant at first, and means still, a fragment struck off an object which is broken. In the fifteenth century it gained the meaning of a sudden noise striking on the ear, and this is preserved to the present day; while the seventeenth century added that of a bright light which strikes the eye.

These are words in a full state of health. Without losing anything of their first vigour, they give forth strong branches in different directions; they are hardy plants, likely to live for a long time to come.

85. But there are other words which already begin to grow feeble; they lose in one way as much as they gain in another.

Chapeau meant a garland for the head. It has lost that meaning, and gained that of couvre-chef, bonnet.

Words.	Meanings lost. to reach the shore	Meanings gained. to arrive at a place.
ATTWET V	to reach the shore	-
Bondir	to resound	to spring back.
Chétij	prisoner	weak.
Flatter	to touch with the palm of the hand	to flatter.
Fripon	glutton	rascal.

Fronder to throw with a sling to criticize.

Poison a draught any poison.

In these words, however, we may see a change of

function, rather than a real loss, since they take in fact a new acceptation. In the following list the domain is decidedly restricted, the words have submitted to the loss of a part of their meaning without any compensation.

Compliment, another form of complément, has lost its general meaning of achèvement (de politesse), the completion of some act of civility, which alone explains the employment of the word in its present sense. Démanteler, to dismantle; guérir, to heal, etc., have lost their proper meanings of "to take off the cloak," and "to save or protect," to keep only the figurative meanings of dismantling a fortress, to save from an illness. Ecervelé means no longer "a person whose brains have been dashed out," but "a thoughtless person."

There is a pathology of language in these losses of meanings undergone by words.

Avaler, to let down, becomes merely to swallow.

Chère, primarily countenance, then reception, becomes merely good cheer.

Dupe, the hoopoe, a bird known for its stupidity, becomes merely a man who is taken in.

Garnement, provision, accountrements, that which furnishes, whence figuratively a soldier, in the sense of mauvais garnement, becomes merely a good-for-nothing fellow.

Sever, to separate, becomes merely to separate the infant from the mother, to wean.

Viande, meat, any sort of food, becomes merely flesh food.

The French language thus possesses a number of words whose present signification is only explicable by their mediæval use, which has now disappeared—a use derived directly from their etymology.

86. Words may entirely die out. We have only to glance at books of the sixteenth century to see what a number of terms are completely dead; and if we turn to the Old French, we have to dig a whole language out of the charnel-house.

Indeed, a dictionary of the old language now in course of publication, which contains none but disused words, will extend to eight or ten quarto volumes; but rather than give examples, which do not, after all, teach us much, I would refer our reader to the words of a profound and sagacious observer, whose interests were not limited to the manners of his time. I mean La Bruyère, who, in his "Caractères," at the end of the chapter "De quelques usages," has many curious and interesting reflections on the losses sustained by the French language in the seventeenth century.

\* "Dictionnaire de l'ancienne langue française," by Frédéric Godefroy ; 4 vols. already published.

## CHAPTER III.

### DESTRUCTIVE AGENCIES.

- 87. We have now to examine the action of disintegrating causes.
- I. Certain words have in themselves the germs of death, and in those cases the language replaces them as best it can, well or ill.
- II. Certain words are crushed out by others more lucky than they, which seize on their significations, suck them dry, so to speak,—and cause their death from inanition.

88. I. In the first series are to be found those words which are too short, and too weak in sound, which at the date of the formation of the Romance languages were unable to resist the deteriorating action of phonetic laws.

Thus the Latin words, suem, luem, reum, apem, avem, opem, ovem, ignem, agnum, ensem, etc.; ie, emere, edere, and many others, which in French would have become sou, lou, rié, ef, ef, euf, euf, ein, ain, ois, etc.; ir, embre, oire, etc., have disappeared in order to give place to

synonyms more sonorous, more full, and more firm of body.

Homonymy at the same epoch was a powerful cause of destruction, and the less-used word has disappeared before its more widely spread homonym.

Veru, a spit, virum, a man, have disappeared before verum, O.F. voir, vrai, true.

Fides, a lyre, has disappeared before fidem, foi, faith.

Plaga, sea-shore, before plaga, plaie, wound.

Môla, a cake, before mola, meule, a mill.

Amnem, a river, before annum, an, a year.

Labrum, wrass (a kind of fish), before labrum, lèvre, a lip.

Talum, a heel, before talem, tel, such.

Gramen, grass, before granum, grain.

Avere, to wish, before habere, avoir, to have.

Habena, a rein, before avena, avoine, oats.

89. It is not only the form of the word which must be taken into account, the signification often plays a part.

By force of constant repetition, the word, which at first merely pointed towards the meaning, becomes the exact sign of the thing which it designates. Now, popular language cannot be content with such precise and cut-and-dried expressions. We have not to deal with scientific or philosophic language, in which each word bears only one idea and simple image; imaginative, lively, and picturesque, the language of the people.

proceeds by way of comparison and metaphor, and, while designating objects, brings them into connection with others, at the same time that it unites them by relations more or less singular and more or less striking.

Now, nothing wears out so quickly as a metaphor; the first term of the comparison is forgotten, as we have already seen, and the word calls up only a simple image or idea. As soon as it has arrived at this state, popular language neglects it, throws it on one side, and replaces it by another, which it turns aside from its proper signification to apply it to the object, which thus takes once more a double colouring. Hence, such substitutions as the following. Caput disappeared before testa, a fragment of a broken pot, figuratively, the receptacle of the brain, whence the word tête. language of the people in our days is beginning to replace tête, which has become too abstract, by boule, a ball.

Crus, leg, is replaced in Spanish by perna, ham, pierna, and in French by gamba, knee-cap, jamho

The people in our day show a tendence to replace jambe by quille, skittle.

Humerus has given place to spatula, originally shoulder-blade, now shoulder, épaule.

Cutis has yielded to pellis, originally fur, now skin, peau.

Intestina to botulus, botellus, originally black-pudding, now bowel, boyau.

Gena to gabata, originally porringer, now cheek, joue.

Os, oris, to bucca, originally cheek, now mouth, bouche.

Thus puella was replaced by pullicella, originally a small fowl, in O.F. maiden, puelle. In Provençal, puella was replaced by tsato, a she-cat.

90. Finally, many words fell out of use, some of them becoming sacred, others polluted. From wholly different causes they shared the same fate.

Urbs, in Latin, designated "the city," i.e. "the great city," Rome, and Rome only; urbs disappeared with the eternal city. Civitas, which took its place in common usage, triumphed in its turn with the rise of the Romance peoples, and became, in French, cité. Villa, in the Merovingian era, replaced it for other reasons.

Verbum became a sacred word—the λόγος, "The Word." The popular tongue no longer dares to give to it the ordinary idea of word; and in this use replaces it by parabola, a sentiment, a thought, a word which the Parables of the Gospel had rendered familiar; and turning aside parabola from its own meaning, it enriched it with the signification formerly possessed by verbum.

91. We pass to examples of the second kind. Enphemism is a very powerful agent in the destruction of words; it consists in substituting for a word defiled by an unpleasant or gross idea another word which has a harmless signification, and which by a discreet allusion recalls the word we wish to avoid. But by

the inevitable progress which we have analyzed, this new word is, in its turn, gradually penetrated by the unpleasant idea; it is defiled by the contact, and disappears in its turn, to give place to another synonym which the same idea will soil afresh and strike fatally.

The old word garce, feminine of garcon, became a synonym for a girl of loose character. The language added to the primitive meaning of the word fille, filia, daughter, the former sense of garce. Fille then replaced garce, and became the feminine of garçon, as well as the feminine of fils. But the same idea which had soiled the word garce, soiled in its turn fille in the sense of maiden; and, in order to restore to the word its primitive purity, the language has added to it the word jeune, young: une jeune fille. But under this form the expression is insufficient, for it cannot be used in speaking of a girl already grown up. The language has therefore chosen to say une jeune personne, a singularly awkward expression. It must be admitted that the French language has not extricated itself with much honour from the difficulty which it made for itself.

Thus French has no equivalent for the charming "maiden," "a little maid," "a pretty maid." All the charm, all the poetry which this term calls up, is lost to the French language, thus injured by popular coarseness.

92. II. Sometimes the new word comes into use for special reasons, and takes the place of another which

might have lived had it not been for the oppression of its formidable neighbour.

See, for instance, what is passing under our very eyes. The Universal Exhibition of 1878 has given official sanction to the word "ticket," in place of that excellent and eminently French word billet. The use of the word "ticket" is now spreading, and, perhaps, will completely conquer billet, in one special meaning at least. Stopper, a word also imported from England, is wresting from arrêter a part of its use. Fashionable people make the train, the steamboat, the engine, and even cabs, stopper.

This phenomenon is specially visible in scientific words. We have previously remarked a popular tendency to prefer words of scientific formation to indigenous French words, as more fashionable and in better style.\* So nager disappeared before naviguer; franchir, to free, before libérer; mûreté, maturity, before maturité; frêleté, frailty, before fragilité; geindre, to groan, before gémir; moutier, a monastery, before monastère; the suffix -aison before the suffix -ation. 'High falutin' writers do not now use étrangler, to strangle, but stranguler; troubler, to trouble, but perturber.

93. We are generally ignorant of the reasons of these transformations. Has the old word disappeared of itself? Has the new synonym killed the old? Have not the two causes been at work? We cannot solve these questions unless some particular fact or special

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<sup>\*</sup> Vide supra, pp. 98, 99.

characteristic enlighten us with regard to the cause of destruction. The documents of bygone language teach us only the fact of competition between the two synonymous terms, and the disappearance of one before the other. They cannot give us the secret causes of the weakness of the one, the power of the other. Even in the language of to-day, which we feel to be to us a living language, we can scarcely seize the play of these internal forces.

### CHAPTER IV

### ARCHAISMS-CONCLUSION.

94. We have now to see how the disappearance of words from a language is occasioned. A generation of men at a given moment begins to abandon a given word, the idea which it denotes being represented by another. The coming generation will be still less acquainted with it, and the moment will arrive in which it will be known only to old men, who, as they pass away, carry it with them to the grave.

In the same way whole languages disappear, just as the Cornish language vanished, about the year 1820, with the last woman who spoke it. Let us suppose that this disappearance of words were to take place in a language, except here and there in a few districts, and we shall get the archaisms of provincial dialects.

95. As a consequence of this process, we meet at all times words which have grown old, i.e. words unknown to the new generation, and which are only employed.

1 = 14.

by the aged These words we characterize as archaic, and unless literary action or some artistic tradition causes them both to be taken up by the general course of the language, and brought again into circulation, they utterly disappear.

"Multa renascentur, quæ jam cecidere, cadentque Quæ nunc sunt in honore vocabula, si volet usus"-

"Many words are born again which have disappeared, and others fall away which are now in favour, if custom so will it." The second part of this statement is perfectly true, and the history of languages brings us face to face with the incessant disappearance of terms, which are replaced more or less happily by new But of the second birth of words, which Horace mentions, examples are much more rare. would be much truer than multa, for this renascence is purely artificial, and the work of a few literary men. Whatever is dead in a language is really dead. Language cannot, any more than the generation which hands on its tradition, retrace its past, and recover what it has left behind in the endless course of its existence.

We have seen words disappear for ever, and we must now point out other archaisms, and these unconscious, in which primitive meanings have outlived themselves. Our modern language is full of the débris of earlier

formations—débris which it is powerless to explain.

96. In the most current phrases, we repeat sounds, expressions, and terms which are explained by general laws belonging to a past time, and which have survived in modern use as the last living witnesses of these laws, as the last formulæ of an earlier age.

There are hardly any familiar expressions which, if we thus inquire into their raison d'être, do not suddenly call up a whole vanished world, and bring before our astonished gaze the ways of speech of our ancestors.

The earliest meaning of cueillir, colligere, to collect, has disappeared, to live again in the composite word which has replaced it, recueillir. From the special meaning of "to bring together (fruits and flowers) by plucking them from the stem," the language has come to the meaning of "to pluck;" the idea of bringing together has disappeared. Cueillir une rose, to pluck a rose.\* That is what common usage in modern French tells us. But now take the terms used in trade, and we shall find the journeyman glass-blower cueillir the glass at the end of his blow-pipe, the mason cueillir the mortar with his trowel. It is in these uses that the meaning which the word had in the old language has taken refuge and is still unconsciously living.†

The preposition en, in, is to our actual consciousness the synonym of dans, with this peculiarity, that it is employed especially before indeterminate nouns: être en France, aller en Italie, porter en terre, être en danger. But how can we explain Jesus est mort en croix; or portrait en pied; or casque en tête? We must go back to the Middle Ages, when en had still the meaning of sur, on, which it retained from the Latin, when the

<sup>\*</sup> Cf. the history of the English word gather.

<sup>†</sup> Cf. supra, p. 124.

French used seoir en cheval, to be on horseback, in continuation of the Latin expression, sedere in equo. The three examples which we have just quoted are the last fragments of a usage general in the old language, which attributed to en the meaning of sur, as well as that of dans.

Coucher, from the Lat. collocare, to place, has only preserved its primitive meaning in the sentence coucher par écrit, to put in writing.

Dépit signified originally and in the old language mépris, contempt—a forgotten meaning, except in en dépit de, in spite of. Faire des vers en dépit de Minerve; en dépit du bon sens.

Hasard was originally a certain stroke in the game of dice, a meaning preserved unconsciously in the expression C'est un coup de hasard, i.e. a chance stroke, where coup, which is no longer understood, wrongly receives the general sense of the word coup, a stroke.

Potage, soup. What is the meaning of pour tout potage, That is all he will get? How are we to associate this figurative expression with the meaning, soup? It is inexplicable, unless we find in potage the primitive meaning which is preserved in (plantes) potagères, used for the pot au feu. Pour tout potage means pour tout pot au feu, for the whole contents of the stew-pot, i.e. for the whole of the dinner.

Règne now means reign. How do we get the expressions, règne animal, règne végétal, règne minéral, etc.—animal, vegetable, mineral, etc. kingdoms? Because règne has here kept in a figurative sense the meaning of kingdom, which it had up to the sixteenth century.

97. These few examples, out of many, suffice to show us how the language of the present day, the language which lives in our thoughts and on our lips, contains many relics of past time—true fossils, since modern language with its general laws of formation and construction can no longer explain them, but living fossils, since they have still their proper functions and special uses.

This permanency of the traces of anterior organisms in the linguistic organisms of to-day necessarily carries back our thoughts to the analogous facts presented by what we may call an allied branch of science, biology.

In the organic life of plants and animals we find the action of the same laws as in the life of language. Living creatures also offer infinitely numerous examples of fragments of earlier organisms—living fossils, since organic force has adapted them to new functions, yet true fossils, since they are not explained by the present conditions of life, and find their only reason for existing in the anterior forms through which the species has passed.

And the comparison may be extended still further. In the linguistic, as in the physical organism, we see the development of the cell which grows and prospers at the expense of those anterior and neighbouring to it, and often ends by absorbing them. In the linguistic, as in the organic world, we see the struggle for existence, the vital competition, which sacrifices species to neighbouring species, individuals to neighbouring individuals better armed for the battle of life. If, in a general

way, it be admitted that all biology is only the history of the differentiation which organisms of the same type have undergone in adapting themselves to divers conditions, so we may affirm that this history of languages is only that of the evolutions, differing with race and place, through which the primitive type has passed. There is a striking coincidence between the laws of organized matter and the unconscious laws which govern the mind in the natural development of language. Does it not seem to tell us that life, under whatever form it presents itself, is subject to the same laws; and, if this be not to exceed the true limits of inductive science, that mind and matter are only two aspects of the same unknowable force, the force which we call Being?

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